Commentary
February 2005

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Terry Teachout

Books in Review
Michael B. Oren • Jonathan Kay • Sean McMeekin
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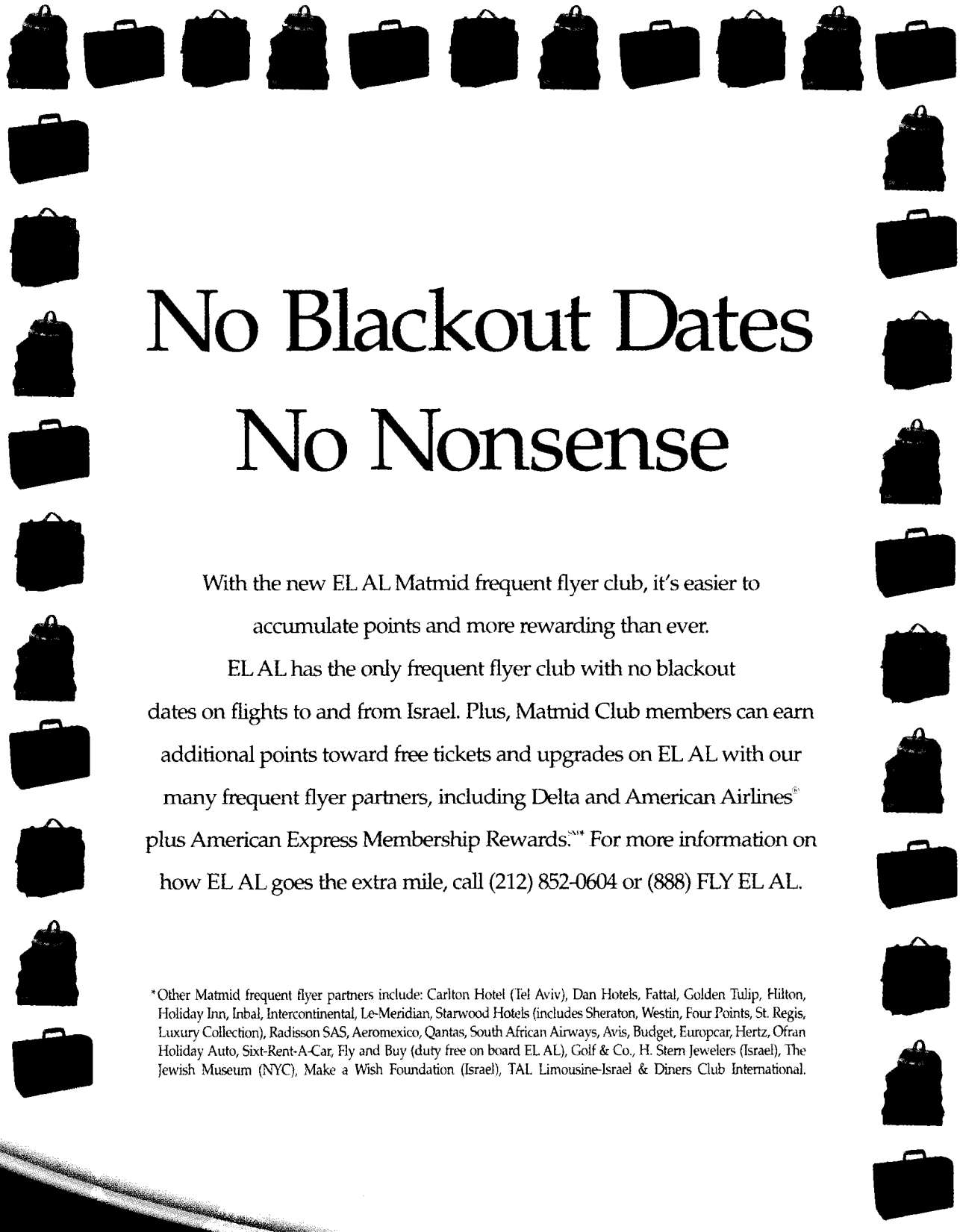

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Commentary

Vol. 119 · February 2005 · No. 2

ARTICLES

23

The War Against World War IV *Norman Podhoretz*

The Bush Doctrine is under assault from every side; herewith, a critical guide to the critics. Does this mean the President is about to alter or reverse course?

43

Has Iraq Weakened Us? *Victor Davis Hanson*

Far from tying us down, the overthrow of Saddam Hussein and its aftermath have enlarged our strategic options.

48

Europe's Crisis *Arthur Waldron*

Might the continent's grave problems force a return to the values that it shares with America?

54

Doing Justice to the Bible *Hillel Halkin*

A secular literary scholar undertakes a faithful translation of the world's most translated book.

61

The Election and the Jewish Vote *Jay Lefkowitz*

Despite the uptick for George W. Bush, old communal habits show few signs of breaking.

OBSERVATIONS

66

When Muslims Convert *Daveed Gartenstein-Ross*

Even in the West, the consequences of "apostasy" are serious—and sometimes deadly.

ART

69

Inside the New MOMA *Steven C. Munson*

The remodeled museum is sleek, spacious, and a failure.

MUSIC

74

Letters of the Composers *Terry Teachout*

To learn about the inner lives of the greats, listen to their music—or read their correspondence.

LETTERS

3

Israel's fence; Judaism in America; origins of the mind; etc.

BOOKS

79 The Persian Puzzle by Kenneth M. Pollack *Michael B. Oren*

82 Home-Alone America by Mary Eberstadt *Jonathan Kay*

85 Reagan and Gorbachev by Jack F. Matlock, Jr. *Sean McMeekin*

87 Kaufman and Co. edited by Laurence Maslon *Algis Valiunas*

90 The War for Muslim Minds by Gilles Kepel *David Warren*

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly (except for a combined July-August issue) by the American Jewish Committee. EDITORIAL AND BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022. Telephone: (212) 891-1400. Fax: (212) 891-6700. Unsolicited manuscripts must be accompanied by a stamped, self-addressed envelope. Letters intended for publication may be edited. Single copy is $4.50; $45 a year, 2 years $79, 3 years $109. Add $11.00 per year for subscriptions to Canada and Mexico, $19.00 for all other foreign destinations. Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, NY 10022.

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Indexed in *Reader's Guide*, *Book Review Digest*, and elsewhere. U.S. Newsstand Distribution by Eastern News Distributors Inc., 1130 Cleveland Rd., Sandusky, OH 44870. Printed in the U.S.A. All back issues are available in electronic form at www.commentarymagazine.com.

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Commentary
February 2005

Letters from Readers

Israel on Trial

To the Editor:

In the course of criticizing the International Court of Justice (ICJ) for its advisory opinion that the security wall being constructed by Israel violates international law, Andrew C. McCarthy cites approvingly the ICJ's lone dissenter, U.S. Judge Thomas Buergenthal ["The End of the Right of Self-Defense?," November 2004]. It is worth noting that Judge Buergenthal, a concentration-camp survivor who has made his career fighting for human rights around the world, also had this to say:

> I share the court's conclusion that international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, and international human-rights law are applicable to the occupied Palestinian territory and must there be faithfully complied with by Israel. I accept that the wall is causing deplorable suffering to many Palestinians living in that territory. In this connection, I agree that the means used to defend against terrorism must conform to all applicable rules of international law and that a state which is the victim of terrorism may not defend itself against this scourge by resorting to measures international law prohibits.

At the same time, Judge Buergenthal disagreed with the ICJ's decision to accept the case—but not on the grounds that the court had no role to play. Rather, in his view, the court did not have the necessary facts before it, and thus could not act properly *as a court*. Buergenthal's reasoning is a far stronger ground for disagreeing with the ICJ's decision than the more wholesale attack on the court advanced by Mr. McCarthy.

Mr. McCarthy attacks the integrity and independence of individual judges from countries with bad records on human rights. But the British, French, German, Dutch, and Japanese judges also found against Israel, as did the American judge on key points. More generally, Mr. McCarthy's attack on the court invites countercharges of hypocrisy against the U.S., which has been more than willing on other occasions to go before the ICJ and to champion its judgments. Recall, for instance, the Iranian hostage crisis, over which the U.S. sued Iran and won. More recently, the ICJ ruled that Belgium could not exercise universal jurisdiction against sitting ministers, thereby preventing a Belgian magistrate from bringing a war-crimes case against Ariel Sharon.

Judge Buergenthal's approach to the case about Israel's security wall was far more persuasive and effective than Mr. McCarthy's. He treated his colleagues on the court as the serious jurists they are, regardless of nationality. Instead of denying their competence to judge fairly, or attacking their motives, he held them to their own professional standards and precedents. He reminded the court of its ruling in 1975 that the critical question in deciding whether to grant an advisory opinion is "whether the court has before it sufficient information and evidence to enable it to arrive at a judicial conclusion." Only on that basis did Judge Buergenthal castigate his colleagues for agreeing to issue an advisory opinion on the legality of the Israeli wall when it could not get the necessary facts from Israel itself. He warned, in short, that they were laying themselves open to charges of political, rather than legal, reasoning.

The distinction is important because the U.S. and, indeed, Israel often have need of the UN and its institutions, as we have seen quite dramatically over the past year in Iraq. With a UN blessing, the U.S. would have been able to secure troops from many more countries, ensure much more active in-

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volvement by a host of UN agencies, and blunt the terrorist claim that the campaign in Iraq is really a war in which the U.S. and its ally, Israel, are seizing and holding Muslim territory for their own purposes. Even the Bush administration is well aware that for every military victory on the ground, we lose another battle in the equally critical war of ideas. Like it or not, the UN has great sway in that second war, as indeed does an institution like the ICJ, which includes judges from Muslim as well as Western countries.

When the U.S. chooses to lead *through* international law rather than against it, it can be remarkably effective. The best proof of this is a report handed down on December 2 by the UN High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Change. The report is intended to form the basis for sweeping reform of the UN, and it addresses precisely the issue that worries Mr. McCarthy most about the ICJ decision on the Israeli wall: the status and interpretation of the right to self-defense enshrined in Article 51 of the UN Charter. Notwithstanding Mr. McCarthy's hyperbole on this point, the report affirms that "Article 51 needs neither extension nor restriction of its long-understood scope." The panel was composed of distinguished former government officials from countries all over the world and was fully aware of the ICJ decision on the wall.

In times of genuine and grave international peril, it seems a far more constructive and effective approach to build on such a consensus and go forward, holding all countries to their professed standards rather than denying any possibility that they might live up to them.

ANNE-MARIE SLAUGHTER
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs
Princeton University
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

Andrew C. McCarthy's article would make sense if Israel were building a wall on its own land, but the wall is being built on Palestinian land. According to Israeli observers, there is no topographical or strategic justification for the route the wall has taken. It is as much a land-grab as it is a self-defense barrier. If the wall had been built on Israeli land, nobody would have complained—or could have.

JOE ROEBER
London, England

ANDREW C. MCCARTHY writes:

In the United States today there are essentially two mindsets regarding a corrupt international institution like the United Nations (and its constituents, including the International Court of Justice). For anyone disposed to view sovereign self-determination as paramount, such entities should simply be dissolved when they become more trouble than they are worth. In this perspective, international relations are a means to the end of national interests, and international legal arrangements, which necessarily reduce self-determination and can promote mischief by placing power in the hands of the unaccountable, are to be regarded with suspicion.

Then there are those like Anne-Marie Slaughter, for whom the Shining City on a Hill is the global village, the international order is paramount, institutions like the UN are ends unto themselves, and no amount of corruption—and certainly no degree of danger to anything so parochial as an individual nation's security—can dim the glow emanating from the conceit that peace is a byproduct of good intentions rather than of the strength and resolve of good nation-states.

Only by someone of such incorrigible internationalist proclivities could the claim at this point be made, straight-faced, that the UN—thoroughly enmeshed in the oil-for-food scandal—might have provided a "blessing," if only the U.S. had sufficiently groveled for one, that would have induced cooperation in the Iraq war from countries Saddam Hussein had managed to buy off with the help of the selfsame UN.

Nor is that the end of her alternative universe. More help from UN agencies? The minute things got tough in post-Saddam Iraq, the UN left—which, one supposes, is to be preferred to its performance in Rwanda and Sudan, where it dithered while genocide raged, or in the Congo, where its "peacekeepers" are under investigation for widespread allegations of rape, prostitution, and pederasty. The Iraq war a scheme by the U.S. and Israel to hold Muslim land for their own purposes? That particular piece of propaganda is risibly untrue: Israel has never been in Iraq, and the U.S., far from seizing Iraq's assets, has poured its own blood and treasure into an effort to provide freedom and self-determination for Iraqis cruelly repressed by a dictator whom the UN enabled for decades. The war of ideas? An institution incapable even of agreeing on a definition of *terrorism*, because it is in the thrall of states that regard barbarism as a legitimate form of freedom-fighting, is unlikely to provide much help on that score.

One can have great respect for Judge Buergenthal's life experience while disagreeing mightily with the narrowness of his dissent from the deplorable rulings of his ICJ colleagues. To begin with, Article 2 of the Fourth Geneva Convention makes clear that it is a pact among (a) nation-states that are (b) "High Contracting Parties." The Palestinian Authority meets neither of those conditions—a fact the ICJ conveniently took note of only for the sake of its skewed conclusion that Israel was somehow violating international law by defending itself from suicide terror attacks. That Judge Buergenthal, like his colleagues, would ignore this rudimentary fact out of a well-meaning desire that Geneva humanitarian protections be extended to Palestinians *as of right* does not make the fact go away.

Furthermore, to suggest that it was improper for the ICJ to render an advisory opinion merely because it had inadequate facts before it is specious. The ICJ did not have Israel, a *central party* to the dispute, before it. It therefore lacked the legitimacy conferred by sovereign consent, a pillar of international law and the want of which fundamentally distinguishes the case of Israel's security fence from cases cited by Prof. Slaughter in which the U.S. and other nations have chosen "to go before the ICJ and champion its judgments."

What is more, in this instance the ICJ was being transparently politicized by General Assembly factions seeking to advance a viru-

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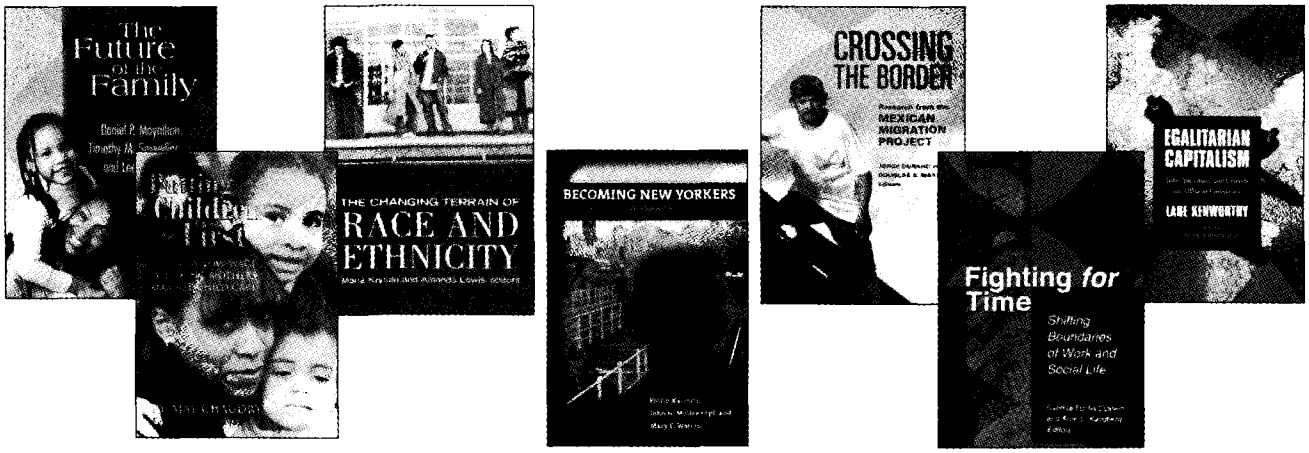

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lently anti-Israel agenda. This alone should have been reason for any self-respecting judicial tribunal to abstain from what was a discretionary exercise. By contrast, the ICJ jumped in with both feet.

Finally, there is Prof. Slaughter's contention that the recent UN reform initiative presents an opportunity for the U.S. "to lead *through* international law." Among the proposals for "reform" are: opening up membership in the UN Human Rights Commission to include still more tyrannical states disdainful of human rights; referring cases of genocide and war crimes to the International Criminal Court (which the U.S. has prudently refused to join); and precluding preemptive acts of self-defense unless they have the permission of the UN Security Council—a body the reformers would expand to allow the addition of other foes of U.S. policy to current, veto-wielding permanent members like Russia, China, and France. "Consensus" in this "reform" world is simply a euphemism for the surrender of democratic self-determination.

Joe Roeber's argument is equally without merit. Since final boundaries between Israel and the territories have not been determined, it is pointless to speak of "Israeli land" and "Palestinian land" as if these were settled realities. The fence is a passive defense measure against terrorism, not a land-grab. A fence built only on undisputed Israeli territory (as if there were such a thing among those plotting Israel's destruction) would not prevent terrorist bombings on Israel's borders.

Contrary to Mr. Roeber's assertion, there is no reason to believe that Israel would refuse to move the fence as necessary to conform to a final diplomatic settlement; pulling back from defensive positions is precisely what Israel did when it signed a treaty with Egypt. Finally, I do not know what "Israeli observers" Mr. Roeber is talking about, but Israel's supreme court carefully scrutinized the "topographical [and] strategic justification" for the fence and approved it, albeit with carefully tailored adjustments to mitigate Palestinian suffering—which is more than can be said for the ICJ's regard for the Israeli victims of Palestinian terrorism.

Jewish America

TO THE EDITOR:

In the course of his essay, "Telling the Story of America's Jews," [November 2004] David Gelernter reviewed Jonathan Sarna's *American Judaism*, but that review is a wish list of topics that Sarna supposedly should have covered rather than a serious engagement with what Sarna actually wrote. Mr. Gelernter was essentially looking for another book, one that treats the impact of Judaism—that is, Jewish ideas—on the American mind.

Michael Novak, in *On Two Wings* (2001), has already written that book, at least in part. What Novak calls "Jewish metaphysics" constitutes in his view one of the wings by which the American eagle takes flight. James Hutson, in *Religion and the Founding of the American Republic* (1998), covers some of the same ground. Sarna is well aware of this sort of literature. Indeed, he wrote a fine paper years ago on what he called "the cult of synthesis," those popular and scholarly Jewish treatments of what Judaism contributed to Americanism.

This literature declined among Jews as their place in America became more secure. There was more to the genre than apologetics—I have argued so myself—but I cannot fault Sarna for steering clear of it. The fact that "Jewish metaphysics" influenced the founding via dissenting Protestantism raises thorny questions about what in it remained Jewish. Is Protestant Biblicism equivalent to Judaism? How can we decide? By all means, let us raise this theme again, but I doubt that Sarna's book was the place to do it.

Sarna wrote a history of religion, of American Judaism, rather than a history of American Jews. Mr. Gelernter notes this but does not take its measure. Sarna's framework is the history of religion in America, a discipline well advanced among Christians but less so among Jews. He shows how Jewish developments are essentially variations on American and, indeed, Christian themes.

Sarna also demonstrates how the problem of freedom is absolutely fundamental to the development of Judaism in this country, even before the founding. At the heart of his story is the accommodation of sacred patterns of self-understanding and communal organization to a republican and then a democratic culture where religious voluntarism is the rule. Mr. Gelernter ignores this fundamental motif. I guess that it is not in the book he wished to read.

ALAN MITTLEMAN
Jewish Theological Seminary
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

Reading David Gelernter's review of Jonathan Sarna's *American Judaism* reminded me of the woman who bought two ties for her son-in-law's birthday. When he dutifully wore one of them at their next meeting, she groused, "What's wrong? You didn't like the other one?"

A book can contain only a limited amount of information between its covers. All a reviewer can do is assess whether or not an author has fulfilled the task he set for himself. In my judgment, Jonathan Sarna's work is (as Mr. Gelernter himself says) "a masterpiece," an excellent presentation in one volume of the nuances and complexities of American Judaism. Sarna draws upon the wide range of sources one would expect from a highly accomplished scholar, often places American Judaism in the context of other religious trends in America, and writes in an engaging style as one who clearly cares deeply about his subject.

What emerges most clearly from Sarna's book is the extent to which many of the issues facing the American Jewish community today have been part of the historical experience of Jews in America—the bifurcation of the American Jewish "establishment" from the days of George Washington; anti-Semitism from the days of Peter Stuyvesant; the ongoing challenge of living a meaningful Jewish life in the absence of external pressures to do so from pre-colonial times. The historical perspective provides an important context for our current situation, for which we have Jonathan Sarna to thank.

[RABBI] JACOB J. SCHACTER
Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik Institute
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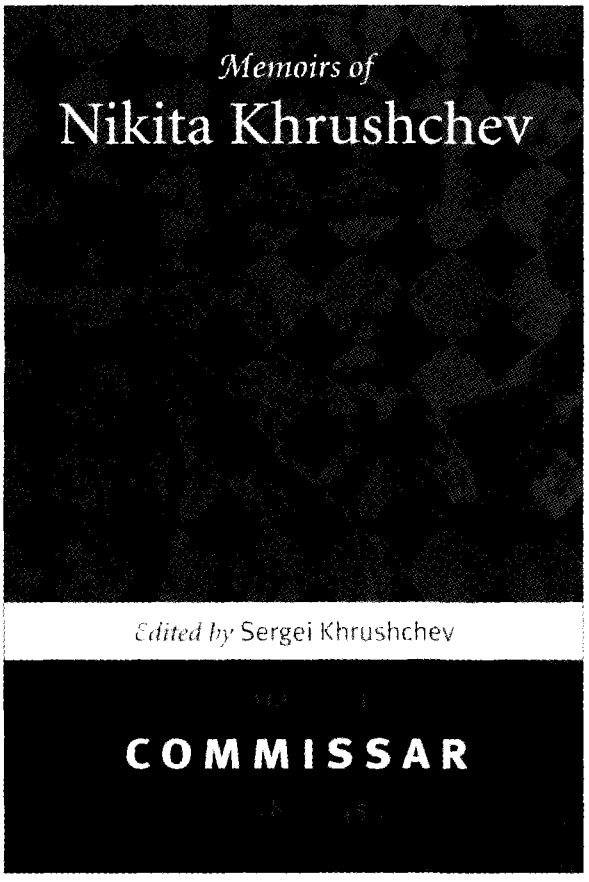

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—William Taubman, winner of the 2004 National Book Critics Circle Award and the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for his book *Khrushchev: The Man and His Era*

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TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter is widely recognized as one of the most brilliant computer scientists of his generation. But he was out of his depth in reviewing two recent books on American Jewish history.

Mr. Gelernter criticizes both Jonathan Sarna's *American Judaism* and Hasia Diner's *The Jews of the United States* for failing to tell him more about things that interest him: prominent modern-Orthodox rabbis, theologians, scholars, and authors, and the development of modern Orthodoxy in general in the United States; Jews in the military, like Admiral Hyman Rickover; and Jews like himself who are uncomfortable with the drive for women's equality in Jewish religious and communal life.

Blaming Sarna for failing to include someone like Rickover (who never was a practicing Jew) in an account of American Judaism is responsible and fair criticism only if the omission distorts Sarna's analysis. It is Mr. Gelernter's duty not merely to highlight the omission but to explain its significance according to a standard more demanding than his own curiosity.

Mr. Gelernter rides a few other hobbyhorses. Calling Diner a feminist (which he does not mean as a compliment) is not a legitimate critique in an essay with pretensions to scholarship. Mr. Gelernter is correct to note that few scholars have documented the rearguard action to keep women out of rabbinical seminaries and off the *bimah* in the United States; he, or qualified historians, should write these histories. But again, criticizing Sarna and Diner for failing to cover his own interests is inappropriate.

Mr. Gelernter is particularly incensed that neither historian has recognized what he considers the primary role of classical Israel in the development of the "modern liberal-democratic state" and America specifically. He takes Diner to task for stating the obvious: that no Jew signed the Declaration of Independence, was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1787, or was active in the campaign for ratification of the Constitution. As against this absence, Mr. Gelernter proposes that Diner and Sarna should have recognized the primacy and continuity of "Jewish influence" beginning with Puritanism and projected across several centuries to the founding of the United States and beyond. Unfortunately, Mr. Gelernter's intuition about this supposedly "big issue" requires more support than the tenuous chain of evidence he offers.

DAVID SOLOMON
MICHAEL FELDBERG
American Jewish Historical Society
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter uncharacteristically stumbles when, in an excess of ethnocentricity, he claims that "the Hebrew Bible furnished a template for democracy" and that "Jewish ideas were decisive to the creation of modern democracy." For all his invocation of what Puritan preachers and writers said a long time ago, Jewish sources and religious ideas have had no more than a negligible impact on how the American political experiment has evolved. In a fundamental document of American democracy like the Bill of Rights, it is impossible to locate a single directly Jewish antecedent.

There are, in fact, important questions to be asked about democracy and the development of American Jewry. Israel Friedlaender, a star at the Jewish Theological Seminary, wrote almost a century ago: "[W]herever our gaze turns, we witness the same spectacle—the decomposition of Judaism, of Jewish living and thinking, under the influence of freedom. . . . Judaism, which stood out like a rock amidst the billows of hatred and storms of persecution, is melting away like wax under the mild rays of freedom." After referring to "our spiritual misery," he argued that American Jews "are blind to the fact that the dawn of the Jews is the dusk of Judaism."

As American Jews celebrate the past three-and-a-half centuries of Jewish life on American soil, the painful questions raised by Friedlaender about democracy and freedom should be the focus of our reflection. Jonathan Sarna, who is a terrific writer (another disagreement with Mr. Gelernter), touches on them only obliquely.

MARVIN SCHICK
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

In his review of two major new syntheses of American Jewish history, David Gelernter resorts to so many carping and capricious objections that the larger pattern of generalization in both books is obscured. But one of his criticisms merits attention. He notes that both Jonathan Sarna and Hasia Diner "have plenty to say about" the salience of the Jews in "modern feminism," but then adds: "I would also be curious about their no less significant role in *anti*-feminism (not a word)."

No less significant? Library shelves bulge with monographs and manifestoes, with scholarly and personal accounts that testify to the inclusion of women in the religious and moral and social life of American Jewry. But how many Jewish books can be called explicitly anti-feminist? Is there any scholarship on this subject upon which Sarna and Diner could have been expected to draw? Even when the Jewish Theological Seminary debated the case for ordaining women as rabbis, foes claimed that the issue should be framed not in terms of female rights but in the light of Jewish law. Does Mr. Gelernter have reason to believe that the losing side of this debate was furtively anti-feminist?

STEPHEN J. WHITFIELD
Lexington, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter's fine essay clearly identifies the unique contributions of Jewish thought to American democracy. The founders of our country, even the deists among them, were steeped in Hebrew literature, and regarded their revolution as the second-greatest liberation movement in history. Six months before the outbreak of war on the village green at Lexington, Thomas Paine, in his mutinous pamphlet *Common Sense*, called King George III the contemporary Pharaoh.

The single most important idea of democracy is what the Declaration of Independence calls the "consent of the governed," a principle that stems from a seminal moment in the history of the Jews. Before stating the terms of the covenant, God told Moses to speak to

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the people and learn whether or not they agreed to become a nation under the sovereignty of God. Only when they accepted did the revelation proceed. Thus it was at Sinai that the first democratic mandate took place, and with it the idea that there can be no valid rule without the agreement of those affected by it.

BERTRAND HORWITZ
Asheville, North Carolina

TO THE EDITOR:

David Gelernter has done his usual insightful job. There are, however, a few interesting things to add to his review.

As an example of Jews being left out of history books, Mr. Gelernter cites the 7th edition of *The Growth of the American Republic* (1980), where Judah Benjamin is described as the "ablest member" of the Confederate cabinet and the "closest to [Jefferson] Davis," but is not identified as a Jew. Mr. Gelernter is actually more right than he knows. The 3rd edition of that book (1942) identifies Benjamin as a "British subject and a Jew." Thus, somewhere between the 3rd and 7th editions, his Jewishness was consciously deleted.

To add to Mr. Gelernter's ideas about the Pilgrims and their harking back to the Hebrew Bible, the following quotations are of interest. From *A Modell of Christian Charity*, by John Winthrop (1630):

> [W]ee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies. . . . And to shutt upp this discourse with the exhortacion of Moses that faithfull servant of the Lord in his last farewll to Israell Deut. 30. . . . [W]ee are Commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commaundements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possesse it.

In *The Bloudy Tenent of Persecution*, Roger Williams's 1644 dissent from the religious structure of the New England colony, he referred to that colony as the "State of the Land of Israel" with its "Kings of Israel and Judah." William Bradford, the first governor of the Plymouth colony, wrote that the "colonists consciously intended to establish Zion in the wilderness."

Of course, Jews as such were not welcomed by the Pilgrims, but there is no doubt that Judaism was their mother's milk. The affinity carries on to this day and provides a good part of the explanation for the support of Israel by traditional Americans.

SIDNEY BROUNSTEIN
Redlands, California

DAVID GELERNTER writes:

Let me deal first with a theme that is common to three of these letters. Alan Mittleman describes my review of Jonathan Sarna's *American Judaism* as a mere "wish list of topics that Sarna supposedly should have covered"; Rabbi Jacob J. Schacter argues that "all a reviewer can do is assess whether or not an author has fulfilled the task he set for himself"; David Solomon and Michael Feldberg say that I have unfairly accused Sarna and Hasia Diner of "failing to tell [me] more about things that interest [me]."

All three letters share the same misbegotten theory of book-reviewing. It should go without saying that a reviewer must evaluate not merely the author's handling of his topics but his *choice* of topics—what the author has put in, what he has left out. If you are rating a tour of Manhattan, you will consider the quality not merely of your tour-guide's spiel but of his choice of sites—was it a good idea to include Bob's Discount Hot Dogs and leave out Rockefeller Center? If a general survey of American history left out all reference to American Jews, a book reviewer had better point this out and take the author to task. Would such a reviewer risk being accused by Mr. Mittleman of belaboring the author with a "wish list of topics that supposedly should have been covered"?

Messrs. Solomon and Feldberg insist that a reviewer must work to "a standard more demanding than his own curiosity." But authors write history books in order to satisfy their own and their readers' curiosity—and I cannot judge a book by its success in satisfying Messrs. Solomon and Feldberg's curiosity. Nor do I know which "more demanding" standards they have in mind. But a history book that satisfied a "higher standard" but did not satisfy me would be a failure by my lights, and my duty as a reviewer would be to say so and say why.

As for Messrs. Solomon and Feldberg's contention that I was "out of my depth" in "Telling the Story of America's Jews," I could recite my credentials for their approval—but I'd hate myself in the morning. I will admit, for the record, that I am no prophet and no son of a prophet.

Now let me consider some of the more substantive comments in these letters.

Respecting the study of Jewish influence on the invention of America, Mr. Mittleman writes that treatments of this subject "declined among Jews as their place in America became more secure." Here he has given us a one-sentence introduction to one of the worst maladies of modern Jewish scholarship. No one wants to be called "insecure"; such diagnoses should be handled as carefully as any other form of insult. Fearing this sort of attack, some Jewish scholars are actually afraid to investigate and celebrate Jewish achievement.

But to call a Jewish author "insecure" simply because he celebrates Jewish accomplishment and genius is usually a gross and silly violation of Occam's razor, which tells us not to posit complexity unnecessarily (or in other words, to choose the simplest explanation that covers the facts). If a Jewish author writes about Jewish achievement and then refuses to publish what he has written, he might indeed be insecure. If he writes about Jewish achievement and *does* publish what he has written, he is far more likely to be proud.

In any case, Mr. Mittleman is convinced that Sarna was right to "steer clear" of the subject of Jewish influence on the founding fathers and the invention of America, because his "framework is the history of religion in America"—and classical Israel's influence on Puritan and early American ideas took place before (or outside of) the events that fall with-

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U.N. Corruption Includes Bias Against Israel

It's Time the Media Set the Record Straight

Branches of the United Nations have endorsed Palestinian terrorist attacks against Israel (or in U.N. terminology – use of "all available means including armed struggle" against "foreign occupation"*). They have taught Palestinian children anti-Jewish hatred and encouraged them to pursue Israel's destruction and have subjected the Jewish state to a unique campaign of vilification. Yet news reports of anti-Israel and anti-Jewish actions by the U.N. routinely ignore the organization's bias and portray the U.N. as an objective moral arbiter.

The U.N. Conference Against Racism in Durban promoted racism – against Israel and the Jews.

The Facts:

Saddam Hussein was not alone in buying influence at the U.N. where corruption goes far beyond the Iraq oil-for-food scam. For more than 30 years, Arab states have used their oil wealth, and the threat of withholding oil, to guarantee an automatic anti-Israel majority.

The U.N. General Assembly, dominated by Arab and Muslim states most of whose schools, media and mosques promote Jew-hatred, repeatedly passes one-sided, anti-Israel (and anti-American) resolutions, and blocks criticism of Palestinian and broader Arab actions, including genocide.

The General Assembly has repeatedly convened emergency sessions dedicated to condemning the Jewish State but has held no such sessions on the Rwandan massacres, Indonesian crimes in East Timor, ethnic cleansing in the former Yugoslavia, Iraqi slaughter of Kurds, Vietnamese mass murder of ethnic Chinese or genocide in the Sudan. (Sudan, a member of the Arab League, has been protected at the U.N. by Arab states, despite the Sudanese government's genocide against Christians and non-Arab Muslims.)

Israel is the only country subject to hostile scrutiny by a standing committee — the "Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Population of the Occupied Territories."

The Arab-Israeli conflict is the only global dispute in which one side's position — the Arab side — is advanced through direct U.N. funding and support. U.N. Secretariat and General Assembly branches spend millions of dollars a year to advocate a pro-Palestinian agenda through conferences, publications and films that delegitimize the State of Israel.

The United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA) is the only U.N. agency dedicated to assisting a specific group of refugees, the Palestinian Arabs, who comprise just 13.5% of all refugees globally. UNRWA schools use anti-Semitic textbooks which seek to delegitimize Israel and promote its destruction.

For more than half a century, UNRWA has opposed permanent settlement of Palestinians in their present areas of residence, instead supporting Arab demands that their refugee status continue until Israel allows them residence within its borders.

UNRWA chief Peter Hansen openly states that Hamas members are on UNRWA's payroll. (The EU and United States designate Hamas a terrorist organization.) UNRWA employees have used official U.N. vehicles, ambulances and travel documents to transport terrorists and weapons. UNRWA camps harbor terrorists who produce bombs, store weapons and recruit and train suicide bombers.

The U.N.'s Commission on Human Rights has repeatedly supported the right of Palestinians to pursue their terror campaign against Israel while ignoring massive human rights violations by its members — including some of the worst human rights violators and sponsors of terrorism.

The U.N. World Conference Against Racism (Durban, 2001) promoted racism — against Israel and the Jews. References to "holocaust" and "anti-Semitism" were applied to the Palestinians as victims of alleged Israeli racism.

The U.N.'s dangerous bias and scapegoating of Israel deserve full and accurate exposure in the media.

*United Nations General Assembly A/RES/37/43 (Dec. 3, 1982)

United Nations General Assembly A/RES/41/101 (Dec 4, 1986)

United Nations commission on Human Rights E/CN/RES/2002/8 (April 15, 2002)

United Nations commission on Human Rights E/CN/RES/2003/6 (April 15, 2003)

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in that framework. If I understand Mr. Mittleman right, he is wrong. Classical Israel and the Hebrew Bible were indeed major influences on Puritanism in Britain. But in America, these influences (naturally) took on a new and distinctive significance; in America, after all, Puritanism was the majority religion, and countervailing influences were minor compared to what prevailed in Europe.

Finally, Mr. Mittleman accuses me of ignoring a "fundamental motif" of Sarna's book: "the accommodation of sacred patterns of self-understanding and communal organization," and so on. But at this point I am afraid that his letter has become merely a wish list of topics that Gelernter supposedly should have covered rather than a serious engagement with what Gelernter actually wrote.

For their part, Messrs. Solomon and Feldberg, extending their criticism of my methods as a reviewer, write that "Blaming Sarna for failing to include someone like [Admiral Hyman] Rickover (who never was a practicing Jew) in an account of American Judaism is responsible and fair criticism only if the omission distorts Sarna's analysis." False—unless Sarna's book were nothing but analysis, and Sarna had (furthermore) declared non-practicing Jews to be off-limits. (In which case we could have argued about this declaration instead of about Rickover.) In fact Sarna has written a history book for general readers, and he *does* include non-practicing as well as practicing Jews. His first duty is accordingly to tell readers what happened and who did it; and he ought to have included Rickover—not only because Rickover's work was monumentally important to America but because Rickover's Jewishness was evidently a significant (negative) factor in his Navy career.

Messrs. Solomon and Feldberg's objection to my calling Hasia Diner a "feminist" is bizarre. Readers want to know an author's angle of attack, assuming it affects the finished product—and Diner's feminism certainly does.

On this same subject, I disagree with Stephen J. Whitfield's suggestion that "bulging library shelves" are a measure of a topic's significance. It is true that there are many more feminist than anti-feminist books, but the anti-feminist books are a lot better. I would suggest to Mr. Whitfield that he start with Midge Decter's *An Old Wife's Tale*. (I do not mean that this book is merely "anti-feminist"; but it certainly *is* anti-feminist, among many other things.)

Mr. Whitfield asks whether I have "reason to believe that the losing side" of the debate at the Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS) over the rabbinical ordination of women was "furtively anti-feminist." Of course, but there was nothing furtive about it. During the late 60's and the 70's, as Mr. Whitfield is well aware, "feminism" came to stand not for the equality of men and women but for their interchangeability—a doctrine that is profoundly incompatible with Judaism and (for that matter) with human dignity. I was on the losing side of the debate myself; so were many other formerly Conservative Jews, male and female. Surely Mr. Whitfield does not believe that the argument was restricted to JTS faculty meetings. The Jewish community has yet to recover from the blow to its unity that was struck at that tragic moment.

As for Marvin Schick's comments regarding the views of Israel Friedlaender, these have become truisms and have been discussed at length for decades; I doubt whether Sarna could have beaten anything more out of this particular dead horse. In any case, the facts show that Friedlaender's ideas are ripe for the trash. Today Orthodox Judaism flourishes in free and democratic America; try telling American yeshivas that they'd be better off in Czarist Russia! If America has been bad for liberal Judaism, it is just possible that the problem lies not with America but with liberal Judaism.

I thank Bertrand Horwitz and Sidney Brounstein for their comments, and Mr. Brounstein for his strikingly germane observations.

Evolutionary Psychology

TO THE EDITOR:

There is nothing intrinsically wrong with scientists writing outside their fields—the great physicist Erwin Schrödinger's reflections on biology, for instance, inspired a generation of top-notch biologists. But mathematician David Berlinski's excursion into evolutionary psychology does little more than muddy some previously clear waters ["On the Origins of the Mind," November 2004].

The linchpin of Mr. Berlinski's attack on evolutionary psychology is his suggestion that scholars like Steven Pinker, Daniel Dennett, and myself believe "that human *behavior* is 'the product of evolution'" (emphasis added). Only the keenest readers would notice that this notion is drawn from a newspaper story. What the "disputatious group" of scholars identified by Mr. Berlinski actually holds in common is not the overstrong claim that evolution has shaped behavior but the far more subtle idea that evolution has shaped the development of the *mind*.

As I explain in my recent book, *The Birth of the Mind*, genes are too slow to participate directly in behavior. Their chief contribution comes "in advance, in laying down and adjusting neural circuitry, not in the moment-by-moment running of the nervous system." Mr. Berlinski runs roughshod over the distinction between behaviors and the neural structures that create them, and in so doing he ignores the academic discipline that seeks to bridge the two, namely, cognitive neuroscience. By all accounts, human behavior is the product of situations, experience, and our genetic endowment, and it stands to reason that we would not be able to predict it by looking at just one variable.

The real question is whether the genetic influence is worth investigating. Mr. Berlinski seems to doubt this, advocating instead an attitude based on magic, mystery, and awe. But while there is plenty in nature to inspire awe, there is no need to throw up our hands. Hundreds of recent studies show that genes can and do affect mental life, and no serious scholar would doubt that our genes owe much to evolution.

Mr. Berlinski may be right that "the longer the chain of causes, the weaker the links between and among them," but his suggestion that this state of affairs represents "a conceptual deficiency that we have no way of expressing, let alone addressing"

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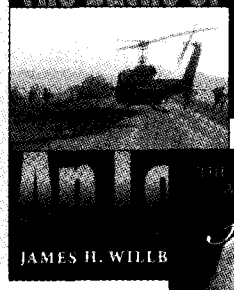

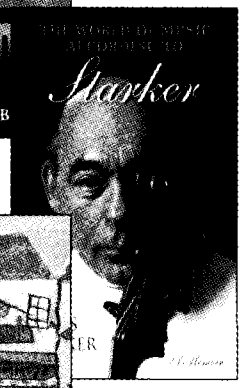

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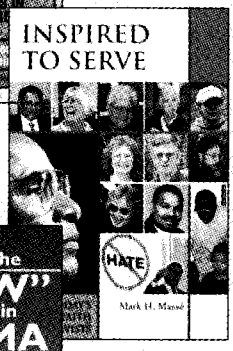

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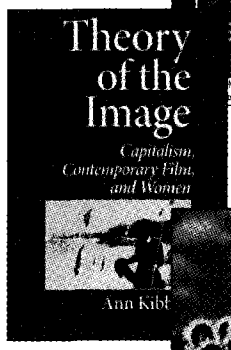

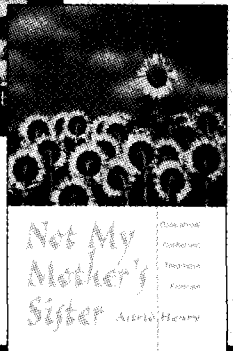

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borders on sophistry. The complexity that Mr. Berlinski apparently fears holds as true in the development of the heart as it does in the brain—try, for example, to predict the exact location of capillaries in identical twins.

But we do not need to invoke mystery or magic to explain the development of the heart, and Mr. Berlinski never gives us a cogent reason for thinking that the situation is any different with the brain. Biology may be more complicated than mathematics or the idealized science that Mr. Berlinski longs for, but the fact that something is complex does not mean that it is not lawful.

GARY MARCUS
New York University
New York City

TO THE EDITOR:

The prospect that centuries of religious, intellectual, and cultural reference points will melt into an unrecognizable new landscape of scientific knowledge understandably provokes unease, visceral resistance, and even alarm in those who sense the magnitude of the coming changes. These feelings are even sharper for evolutionary psychologists, because our work forces us to live within the strange realities of this barely explored new world. This sense of impending dislocation creates an appetite for seemingly authoritative dismissals of the primary claims of evolutionary psychology, which leading intellectual journals accordingly feed. The appeal of these crafted dismissals is that they give permission to intellectuals to *think* the convenient: that they do not have to deal with this new world, or revise or surrender any of their beliefs or intellectual allegiances because—what a relief—it is a spurious revolution. Time to sleep.

Yet critics typically fail to take the one step that is indispensable to making their criticism authoritative or even germane: they do not actually read the primary literature or know its content, and so doom themselves to arguing with their own confusions, trafficking in myth, rumor, mischaracterization, and irrelevancy. A brief letter can catalog only a few such confusions present in David Berlinski's essay.

Natural selection is not "a freefloating form of agency" but an observable, well-modeled physical process like osmosis or convection, deductively entailed by the application of set theory to self-replicating physical systems. Mr. Berlinski's claim that "field studies have proved notoriously inconclusive when it comes to natural selection" betrays a striking unwillingness to expose himself to the primary literature, in which predictions derived from selectionist theories beautifully explain thousands of observations with economy and mathematical elegance.

More substantially, evolutionary psychologists are supposed to be abashed because Mr. Berlinski has held us up to his Procrustean "model for what science should be"—Newton's use of differential equations to describe mechanical systems—and found us guilty in his imagination of an insufficient use of differential equations. However impressive this is meant to sound to the mathematically untrained, it provokes laughter in practicing scientists, who use a broad array of mathematical and formal tools in their work. It reveals a basic misunderstanding of the nature of science, no more trenchant than criticizing evolutionary psychologists for not wearing lab coats. Sciences progress not by superstitiously aping the surface forms of past successes, but by applying or inventing whatever formal tools are made necessary by the nature of the phenomena under study. The evolved informational and regulatory functions of the brain are better captured by computational formalizations than by differential equations.

Since Newton, a broad array of new mathematical tools has been developed and applied to an enormous range of sciences. Logic, set theory, combinatorics, probability theory, statistics, algorithmics, geometry, information theory, signal-detection theory, control theory, game theory—all play an active role in evolutionary psychology, alongside differential equations. Examples include kinematic geometry in Roger Shepard's evolutionary approach to psychophysics, which led to his National Medal of Science; frequentist approaches to probability, used by ourselves and Gerd Gigerenzer to explore evolved mechanisms for judging risk; and our reliance on game theory and various standard and nonstandard logics to investigate evolved reasoning programs enabling human cooperation. Much of the edifice of modern science, from the discovery of the genetic code, to biochemistry, cell biology, developmental biology, immunology, neuroscience, zoology, and geology would not pass Mr. Berlinski's superstitious test, because their rich content is not expressible by differential equations.

Mr. Berlinski's other major argument is that the findings of evolutionary psychology are essentially "trivial." This is the standard claim of critics who wish to be evasively deflationary, without having to assume the burden and risk of showing how any specific findings are actually wrong. Although some findings of evolutionary psychologists may turn out to be wrong, the charge of triviality betrays an elementary unfamiliarity with the field.

Here are some nontrivial discoveries. The laws of thought are not the laws of logic, and do not consist primarily of general-purpose, content-free learning rules (as previously believed). Human rationality is achieved though a heterogeneous collection of reasoning specializations, with their own theoretically predicted, proprietary, nonstandard logics ("innate ideas"), whose diverse structures reflect the structures of various enduring, ancestral adaptive problems. The foundation of human economic activity is an evolved neural mechanism specialized for reasoning about exchange. Evidence confirms the predicted existence of a previously unknown mechanism designed to use ancestrally reliable cues to detect close genetic relatives, to intensify family love toward those individuals, and to activate sexual aversion toward them (i.e., Freud had it exactly wrong). The moral sentiments so far investigated have the characteristics predicted by the hypothesis that they evolved as game-theoretic solutions to the adaptive problems posed by small-group interactions.

Other studies have unpacked the evolved functional logic of anger; mapped the cognitive machinery that causes humans to see each other as members of coalitions, showing how this turns

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on and off the tendency to categorize others racially; and identified theoretically predicted, previously unknown factors that place children at greatly increased risk of physical and sexual abuse. Our colleagues' research on universals in mating and sexual attraction, which Mr. Berlinski derides as trivial, falsified mainstream anthropological theories and formed the basis of a sweeping explanation of cultural swings in sexual mores (see James Q. Wilson, "Sex and the Marriage Market," in COMMENTARY, March 2002). More fundamentally still, the theoretical tenets that have ruled the social sciences for the last century—for example, that human mental content is predominantly the arbitrary local product of social conditioning acting on a blank-slate mind—have been decisively falsified.

This is not a trivial harvest for two dozen researchers, working almost entirely without funding for the past two decades. Such a small group would have had no impact if the ideas were not broadly correct, well-grounded in the natural sciences, and theoretically and empirically powerful. Who knows what might be accomplished if the enterprise were ever funded, or if critics felt an obligation to learn its content and report it accurately?

JOHN TOOBY
LEDA COSMIDES
Center for Evolutionary Psychology
University of California
Santa Barbara, California

TO THE EDITOR:

To the layman, David Berlinski's arguments may sound erudite and incisive, but to the scientist they are sophomoric and outlandish. "Natural selection," he informs us, "is certainly not a force of nature" because the only basic forces of nature are gravitation, the electromagnetic force, and the strong and the weak force. This is like claiming that Hemingway was a poor writer because he used words, whereas we know that the only basic units of written communication are letters of the alphabet.

Mr. Berlinski tells us that the great biologist Motoo Kimura showed that the bulk of genetic evolution is due to "random drift" rather than to natural selection. This may be true—the strength of selection at genetic loci is still not fully understood—but Kimura and his colleagues never doubted that phenotypic traits that impose fitness costs on their bearers (e.g., the human brain, with its huge energy needs) cannot persist except through natural selection.

Mr. Berlinski's goal is to criticize the efforts of evolutionary psychologists to treat the human mind as an evolutionary adaptation. But he shows his misunderstanding of the real issue in the following paragraph:

> Thus, when Steven Pinker writes that "nature does not dictate what we should accept or how we should live our lives," he is expressing a hope entirely at odds with his professional commitments. If ordinary men and women are, like [Pinker] himself, free to tell their genes "to go jump in the lake," why then pay the slightest attention to evolutionary psychology—why pay the slightest attention to Pinker?

The answer is completely transparent: nature strongly affects, but most likely does

Why Is the US Holocaust Memorial Museum Silent About Arab Anti-Semitism?

- The US Holocaust Museum has NEVER had a program, exhibit, lecture or web page devoted to current Arab anti-Semitism.
- Yehuda Bauer, director emeritus of Yad Vashem, writes: "The language of Islamism is plainly and clearly a genocidal one. They are striving for a repetition of the mass murder of Jews."
- Yet the Holocaust Museum, the US authority on genocide, is silent. It is the silence of the 1930's. It is the silence that pretends there is no danger, and encourages inaction.
- The core of the Museum's mission is public education. It applies this to Rwanda, the Sudan and Darfur. But on Arab genocidal incitement against Jews, silence.

The Museum Director challenges audiences: "What would you have done then?"

We ask the Museum: What are you doing now?

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fzeidman@woodrock.com

Sara Bloomfield, executive director
202-488-0400 ext.415

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not determine, what we should accept and how we should live our lives, just as the terrain and climate in which we build our homes affect but do not determine our architectural choices, or as a sculptor's raw stone affects but does not determine the final creation.

Evolutionary psychology has helped us understand some of the more welfare-threatening aspects of the human psyche, such as our propensity to exaggerate racial and ethnic differences, our susceptibility to obesity, and our excessive attention to gender differences in behavior. Evolutionary psychology has also helped us understand some of our positive qualities, including social emotions, the ethic of reciprocity, the commitment to egalitarian political principles, and the like.

True, many evolutionary psychologists believe that the human mind is completely a product of evolutionary adaptation, and I agree with Mr. Berlinski that this belief is wholly unwarranted. It is not credible to assert that the human capacities to produce mathematical theorems, great art, and sophisticated systems of morality—let alone our desire to pursue truth for its own sake—are simply the product of the same forces that gave rise to the elephant's trunk and the kangaroo's pouch.

Unlike Mr. Berlinski, I believe that biological science, including evolutionary psychology, is among the most penetrating and insightful products of human activity. It need not be discredited in a misguided attempt to give the human mind its due.

HERBERT GINTIS
Santa Fe Institute
Northampton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski suggests that since the computer is like an abacus, the mind is therefore not like a computer. This confuses the "is" of predication with the "is" of identity, leading to an obvious analogical fallacy. With greater justification one might instead say that the computer is not like an abacus, since it is typically many orders of magnitude faster and has a vastly greater memory capacity. The fact that computers can perform complex functions that were once reserved to human beings derives from just these characteristics. No abacus could operate a robot explorer on the surface of Mars. This is not to say that minds *are* computers, but that Mr. Berlinski's befuddled logic contributes nothing to the debate.

Mr. Berlinski also ignores the statistical basis of most arguments in evolutionary psychology. An amusing example is his discussion of the relationship between female fertility and male judgments of feminine beauty. Empirical data show that, in general, men find those women beautiful who are most average. This is not a paradox, since the variance for beauty traits guarantees that most women do not lie at or near the mode for any of them. If beautiful women are most average, they are also likely to be most fertile. Why? Because in a normal distribution, the mean, though uncommon, is still the commonest single result. All else being equal, frequency indicates fitness, which is just another name for differential reproductive success. Men prefer beautiful women for the same reason they pick stocks with a proven track record. Even the passions reason inductively.

KARL F. WESSEL
Rancho Palos Verdes, California

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski nicely surveys the chain of reasoning invoked in evolutionary psychology. My 2004 book *What Is Thought?* set out directly to provide the missing steps in that chain—in particular, to understand the case for evolutionary psychology at a computational level.

Physics is not the only discipline that has uncovered absolute laws. Computer scientists have discovered laws that regulate what and how computations are possible. These suggest a concrete proposal that answers many of Mr. Berlinski's questions. Though my argument does not meet his standard of reducing evolutionary psychology to mathematics, it does provide what seems the best available answer to the critical gaps.

Computer scientists have in recent years formalized the philosophical principle of Occam's razor and shown that it underlies the learning of concepts. A natural conjecture based on this work yields a model of mind as arising from a compact "Occam" program evolved into the genome. One of several surprises is a new picture of the relationship of nature and nurture. Complexity theory suggests that discovery of this Occam program required the massive computational resources of evolution. The genomic program thus discovered then develops mental processes at the level of apes in just months, requiring relatively little computation.

But humans have built a huge computational superstructure on top of what is programmed in the genome. Language is what has made possible this cumulative progress, allowing contributions from billions of individual minds. Thus, while the critical circuitry enabling thought is essentially programmed in the genome, the vast difference between human and ape cognition is explainable in terms of better nurture, which facilitates cumulative program discovery.

ERIC B. BAUM
Princeton, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski sets too high a standard for evolutionary psychology in his otherwise outstanding article. The "model for what science should be" is too demanding for most fields outside of mathematics and the physical sciences. A more reasonable standard is that evolutionary psychology should perform as well as evolutionary physiology. If evolutionary psychology can explain jealousy as well as evolutionary physiology explains the thumb, then it should be accepted until a better explanation is found.

DAVID WOLFE
Monterey, California

TO THE EDITOR:

David Berlinski's criticisms of the simplistic similes and analogies dominating much of "mind science" are apropos. But it should be noted that serious journals of science frequently print papers that do not operate upon the assumption either that the human mind is "like" a computer or that it is "like" other human organs. Of the three similes discussed by Mr. Berlinski, only the assumption that brains (minds) arise through evolution, like the rest of the organism, is a fixture in

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neural science. And it appears to be the only assumption that preserves the laws of thermodynamics, along with the rest of physics.

I do not believe that there needs to be a dichotomy between mental and physical properties at all, or that thermodynamic considerations will allow it. If one rejects the atomistic view of the mind as being merely the sum of nerve-firings, and instead recognizes that interactions internal to the electrical field(s) associated with nerve-firings may be what consciousness is, then the only difference between the "physical" and the "mental" is that the "mental" actually *is* the "physical" within the internal interactivity of the electrical field itself. If conscious mental activity is the differential activity of potentials within the electrical field, we need only envision the mental as being in reality what we symbolically and observationally understand a complex electrical field to be. And best of all, one may compare the reports humans make of their internal states with what is externally observed in order scientifically to test such a hypothesis.

I fully agree with Mr. Berlinski that much of what passes for "mind science" is only so much hand-waving. The dominance of such views impedes the consideration of complex models that deal with the differences between symbolic models and actual physical interactivity in the brain. My hope is that Mr. Berlinski's critique will be understood and taken to heart, so that models addressing the issues he raises will be seriously studied and further developed.

GLEN DAVIDSON
College Place, Washington

TO THE EDITOR:

To describe the virtues of David Berlinski's articles in COMMENTARY on the reigning orthodoxies and received wisdom of so many scientists would make for a very long letter indeed: vivid images, effective tropes, unrivaled knowledge of the literature, sure grasp of the issues. But what I most appreciate about Mr. Berlinski's essays (and I say this, paradoxically, as a professional theologian) is that in the dialogue between religion and science, he wisely leaves religion out of the picture. Other writers spot similar contradictions in materialist accounts of science. But too many of them overreach and see these antinomies not just as a warrant for theology (fair enough) but also as a warrant for their arguments about what science should say *instead* of materialism.

My only puzzle about Mr. Berlinski's most recent essay is why he stopped short in his administration of the *coup de grâce* to the neurological materialists. Yes, "[a]t some time in the history of the universe, there were no human minds, and at some time later, there were." But that truth only counts when these minds are thereby forced to say as well, "at some time in the history of the universe, there were no human minds, and later I became aware of *my* mind." In other words, minds (and primitive sensations, too) only come into being as a first-person reality: no sensation without a sensor, and no mind without an "I" to be a mind *of*.

The first-person nature of the mind is something about which science can in principle have nothing to say. In philosophy this ineluctable "first-person-ness" is known as "perspectivalism" (or what

What the Washington Post Offers as Coverage of the Arab War Against Israel: Lies, Distortions and Anti-Israel Bias

- The Post criticizes Israel for defending itself but excuses the Palestinians for their deliberate killing and maiming of civilians.
- The Post ignores Arab incitement to hatred of Jews and Israelis in schools, mosques and the media.
- The Post writes sympathetic biographical sketches of Palestinian terrorists. At the same time, it exaggerates isolated instances of misconduct by Israeli soldiers to make them appear routine.
- The Post uses unnamed and unreliable sources, including individuals and groups with a history of distortion and fabrication.
- The Post airbrushed history to turn Yasser Arafat, a lifelong terrorist who sought the elimination of Israel, into a heroic figure seeking nothing more that a peaceful two-state solution.
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Martin Heidegger called "thrownness"). I prefer to call it the "Why me?" question. Why was I not born as Cleopatra's maid, or Cicero's pedagogue, or a peasant working on the estate of Charlemagne, or even as my sister? How can any psychology, Darwinian or otherwise, explain that enigma?

The point behind these various terms is that no one chooses to be born. We cannot choose our sex, our parents, our race or nationality, or even to a large extent our personality and character. Even if, *per impossibile*, computers were made to think, a truly thinking computer would soon be asking, "Why wasn't I born a rat, a cat, or a bat?"

Science has always been forced to stop dead at that threshold—at just the point, in other words, where religion takes over.

REV. EDWARD T. OAKES
University of St. Mary of the Lake
Mundelein, Illinois

DAVID BERLINSKI writes:

According to Gary Marcus, I erred in assigning to evolutionary psychologists the thesis that evolution has shaped the development of human *behavior*. The "far more subtle" thesis he himself champions is that evolution "has shaped the development of the mind." But I assigned no such view to Mr. Marcus, nor did I endorse it myself. My essay was about the human mind, just as its title asserted; in recapitulating the chief doctrines of evolutionary psychology, I quoted Mr. Marcus referring to the mind as the "organ of thought and language."

Nevertheless, if "evolution has shaped the development of the mind," it does follow that human behavior is the product of evolution as well—at least to the extent that evolutionary psychology has a real claim on our attention. What Boron salts do, I observed in my essay, is determined by their chemical structure; if what human beings do is *not* determined by their mental structure, then the mind is not the source of their actions.

I do not in the least doubt that "genes can and do affect mental life"; so can and so does the liver, and often more dramatically. But nothing in what I have ever written can be taken as suggesting that I am busy "advocating an attitude based on magic, mystery, and awe." Far from celebrating the powers of the night, I deplored them as "depressing"; I am an advocate of the light, as readers of my work are well aware.

Commenting upon my analysis of the second simile embraced by evolutionary psychology—*that the mind is like any other organ of the body*—Mr. Marcus discerns "sophistry"; he does so by neglecting to cite properly what I wrote. Referring to nine examples of progressively inflated rhetoric, I remarked that they "suggest that the longer the chain of causes, the weaker the links between and among them." According to Mr. Marcus, I then characterized this state of affairs as "'a conceptual deficiency that we have no way of expressing, let alone addressing.'" In fact what I wrote was rather more circumspect: "Whether this [state of affairs] represents nothing more than the fact that our knowledge is incomplete, *or whether* it points to a conceptual deficiency that we have no way of expressing, let alone addressing—these are matters that we cannot now judge." My words were disjunctive and inconclusive.

Then there is Mr. Marcus's comparison of the heart with the brain. He is persuaded that just as we can imagine a complete causal pathway leading to the formation of the human heart, so we can imagine a complete causal pathway leading to the formation of the human brain. But if the human mind is understood as a physical organ, it becomes very difficult to keep sight of its astonishing *properties*—the very ones I cited at the beginning of my essay. If, on the other hand, the human mind is understood as the source of language, cognition, and sentiment, then it becomes very difficult to imagine a complete causal chain leading to its *formation*.

Those difficulties are not simply matters of detail. We cannot rationally determine whether the human mind is the expression of information contained in the human genome until we have properly characterized its properties. This is something that plainly we are not yet in a position to do. (For further elucidation, see my article on the evolution of the mammalian eye, "A Scientific Scandal," in the April 2003 COMMENTARY, and the subsequent exchange with readers in the July-August issue of the same year.)

John Tooby and Leda Cosmides suspect that "unease" and even "alarm" are what prompted my "seemingly authoritative" dismissal of evolutionary psychology. I assure them I need neither unease nor alarm in order to seem authoritative. Unlike some of my other recalcitrant organs, my spleen retains its preternatural grandeur.

Having taken up a third of their long letter in pointless complaints, Tooby and Cosmides conclude— naturally enough—that the remaining two-thirds are insufficient to provide readers with a "full catalog" of my confusions; a partial list must do. Curiously enough, although that list conveys a rich sense of their own indignation, it fails to include either detailed arguments or specific references to the literature.

It would have made for an improvement in understanding, not to mention communication, if my correspondents had accurately represented those of my arguments they are eager to dismiss. For example, I did not for a moment suggest that evolutionary psychologists should busy themselves with differential equations, or occupy themselves in "superstitiously aping the surface forms of past successes" (although some judicious aping on their own part would not be amiss). What I proposed to do was to compare evolutionary psychology with "the model for what science should be," the better to see the slippage that resulted. My conclusion, of course, was that there is plenty of slippage to be seen, but how traction is to be recovered is not my concern. I am not, after all, an evolutionary psychologist.

As for their other complaints: in a long passage beginning with the words "Here are some nontrivial discoveries," and ending two paragraphs later with the words "have been decisively falsified," Tooby and Cosmides survey the chief accomplishments of their discipline, and find them good. They do this because they are under the impression that I have dismissed their own research as trivial. But that is

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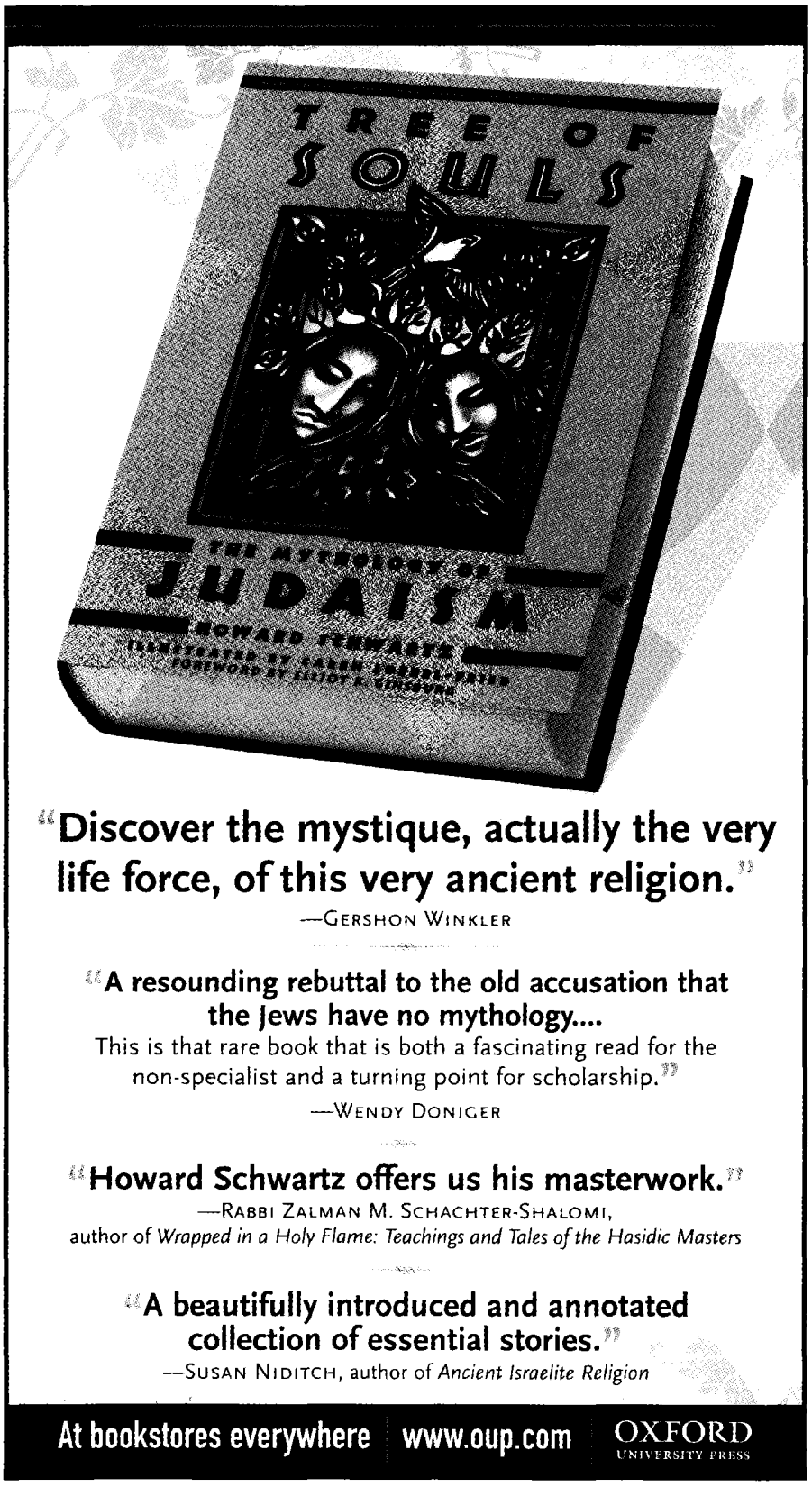
a misunderstanding. I did not discuss their work at all, and the word "trivial" does not occur in my essay; neither does the judgment that it might express.

Tooby and Cosmides are on more faithful textual grounds in observing that I dismissed evolutionary field studies as "notoriously inconclusive." They are, and I did. Consider, for example, the field studies undertaken after the publication in 1986 of J.A. Endler's well-known treatise, *Natural Selection in the Wild*. In the years since, any number of biologists have been trooping off to grim, inhospitable places in order to consider natural selection where it is supposed to be working. Reviewing the recent literature in a survey titled "The Strength of Phenotypic Selection in Natural Populations," J.G. Kingsolver, H.E. Hoekstra, D. Berrigan, S.N. Vignieri, C.E. Hill, A. Hoang, P. Gilbert, and P. Beerli—a veritable regiment of researchers—discussed 63 published field studies dealing with 62 species. Their conclusions may be found in the March 2001 issue of the *American Naturalist*.

In their abstract, Kingsolver et al. write that "most published selection studies were unreplicated and had sample sizes below 135 individuals, resulting in low statistical power to detect selection of the magnitude typically reported for natural selection." (In a selection study based on 134 individuals, they write, in which the linear selection gradient is 0.02, "the probability that one could reject the null hypothesis of no selection at the 95-percent level is less than 50 percent.") When larger sample sizes are considered—greater than 1,000— the sta-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tistical picture is more sobering still. "Our most powerful studies," Kingsolver et al. write, "indicate that selection is weak or absent." Inconclusive enough?

Finally, I am as eager as Tooby and Cosmides to assume my rightful place at the funding trough, and I believe my prospects would be improved if only *they* got out of my way.

Scientists, Herbert Gintis writes, are apt to find my arguments "sophomoric and outlandish." But it would appear that he himself agrees with my conclusions—at least to the extent of affirming that "the belief that the human mind is wholly a product of evolutionary adaptation is . . . wholly unwarranted." Well, to quote Miguel de Unamuno, "*Si un hombre nunca se contradice, será porque nunca dice nada*" (if a man never contradicts himself, this can only be because he never says anything at all).

I argued in my essay that if natural selection is a force, then it is certainly not a force of *nature*. Acting as witness for the prosecution, Mr. Gintis demurs. Just as words are made up of letters, so natural selection is made up of elementary forces. This analogy will seem compelling only if some description of natural selection as a force can be *derived* from a description of its constituent physical elements. But that cannot be done. As for the characterization of Motoo Kimura's position that Mr. Gintis offers, not only do I agree with it but, acting preemptively, I said as much in my essay. Kimura, I wrote there, "is willing to accept the Darwinian disjunction: either complex adaptations are the result of natural selection or they are the result of nothing at all."

In asserting that "nature strongly affects, but most likely does not determine, what we should accept and how we should live our lives," Mr. Gintis has rediscovered the usefulness of Ptolemy's concept of influence. It is a discovery that Thomas Aquinas made as well. "The stars," he wrote, "cannot be the direct cause of the free will's operation": since the will is not a material object, it cannot be the effect of a material cause. Nevertheless, the stars serve as "an inclination" to those operations. In place of the stars, evolutionary psychologists, and Mr. Gintis along with them, have now substituted the genes. The result is a familiar form of incoherence, if one that has to be abandoned as soon as genetic accounts are clear enough to be tested. We are not *inclined* to see what we do see. We have no choice in the matter.

The improvements in understanding that Mr. Gintis attributes to evolutionary psychology were not properly the subject of my essay; still, no matter how generously its conclusions are interpreted, I find it mystifying that he discerns among them "a commitment to egalitarian political principles." As for whether the biological sciences are "among the most penetrating and insightful products of human activity," I could not agree more; my own appreciation for them is exceeded only by my eagerness to make use of their discoveries before it is too late to derive benefit from them.

Karl F. Wessel is quite wrong about the computer and the abacus. The idealized abacus has precisely the power of a Turing machine. Details may be found in chapters 6 and 7 of the third edition of George S. Boolos and Richard C. Jeffrey's *Computability and Logic*.

The remarks Mr. Wessel advances about beautiful women suggest an alarming indifference to the facts of life. Great beauties are not counted great beauties because they look like other women. They are beautiful precisely because they do not. But whether average or extraordinary, beauty has virtually nothing to do with fertility. The overwhelming majority of women between the advent of puberty and the onset of menopause are fertile, and those who are not fertile fail to reveal their deficiency by means of visible hormonal markers.

In his friendly letter, Eric B. Baum suggests that my reservations about evolutionary psychology might best be addressed by a close reading of his own book, *What Is Thought?* Since I have not yet done so, I cannot comment in detail; but his letter does not inspire me to order a copy.

Specifically, I do not understand what Mr. Baum means when he suggests that Occam's razor underlies the learning of concepts, or what he means by saying that the "Occam program required the massive computational resources of evolution," or for that matter what he means by the "computational resources of evolution" (a phrase that suggests Daniel Dennett's celebration of natural selection as an algorithm, and seems to have about as much content), or how the "genomic program thus discovered then develops mental processes at the level of apes in just months." Of course, the fault may well be my own: too much time spent watching television and not enough reading the edgy new literature.

I am perfectly willing to accept David Wolfe's suggestion that evolutionary psychology should meet the standards of evolutionary physiology, but insofar as the latter discipline could be judged successful, it would be because it met precisely the standards I have set. But in fact I do not believe that *evolutionary* physiology meets those standards at all, which makes me willing to press the comparison between the two disciplines to the bitter end. It would be far more reasonable to argue that both psychology and physiology should meet the same standards. For the moment, they do not. If and when they did, that would still leave unexplained the origin of both the major physiological and the major psychological systems.

I appreciate but cannot completely endorse Glen Davidson's remarks. "[O]nly the assumption that brains (minds) arise through evolution . . . preserves the laws of thermodynamics," Mr. Davidson writes. If by evolution he means nothing more than some physical process or other, then yes, it is trivially true that only a physical process could possibly preserve the laws of thermodynamics. But if by evolution he means a Darwinian process of random variation and natural selection, then it is by no means clear that other physically plausible alternatives might not exist.

That is one problem. A second follows when Mr. Davidson lets light slip between the brain and the mind. If he means to argue that the brain as a physical structure must respect the laws of thermodynamics, I cheer him on; but if the mind and the brain prove in the end to be hopelessly distinct, then plainly thermodynamic

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considerations will play less of a role than he conjectures. A physical theory applies, after all, to physical objects. In the past half-century, both philosophers and cognitive scientists have displayed an almost indecent eagerness to separate themselves from any form of Cartesian dualism. Nevertheless, Descartes' ghost keeps shambling on in their pursuit and, even more remarkably, often has interesting things to say.

In the balance of his comments, Mr. Davidson seems to be continuing another tradition in cognitive psychology (and analytic philosophy as well), one involving the dismissal of precise descriptive detail in our accounts of mental life and their replacement by rhetorical categories so general as to be virtually scholastic. What does it really mean to say that consciousness may be identical to "interactions internal to the electrical fields associated with nerve firings"? I have no quarrel with those electrical fields; but before any identification can be made between fields and consciousness, surely we have some right to an explication of what consciousness *is*? Unfortunately, the moment such an explication is undertaken, a gabble of incomplete metaphors, corrupt similes, and half-formed intuitions compete for attention.

Thus, when Mr. Davidson talks of "conscious mental activity," is consciousness an attribute that one can peel off from a mental act itself, like the skin from an orange? Or is it rather that consciousness and act are indissoluble, now and forever? Very often we speak of consciousness when we wish to convey a heightened state of *awareness*. This might suggest that in some circumstances it reflects attention paid to previously overlooked mental states, as when we become suddenly conscious of fear, embarrassment, or even hunger. But we may certainly be aware of certain states or even sensations without being conscious of them. It makes perfect sense to speak of an unconscious awareness (of danger, for instance), but no sense at all to speak of an unconscious consciousness.

I may be conscious of my thoughts, my memories, my aches and pains, or my clothes; I may be conscious as well of my past, my age, my rights, my pronunciation of French, my standing in the community, my real feelings, or my unwillingness to sign a questionable legal document. The word, and the concept it denotes, open up to a vast spider web of intricate associations and remarkably delicate distinctions. *Consciousness* itself? Who knows what it is, or even whether it is important?

I very much appreciate Father Edward T. Oakes's efforts to describe the virtues of my essay. I am also sympathetic to the philosophical considerations that he introduces, to the extent that I understand them—but only to that extent. I suppose we do know our minds from the inside out, but in saying that I know my own mind, am I committing myself to the view that I am one thing and what I know is another? In finding an "enigma" in the question of why he was not born Cleopatra's maid, Father Oakes has neglected to consider the possibility that the question is incoherent because the situation he suggests is impossible. These subtle and difficult issues are discussed in Saul Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*.

In a more general sense, I would contend that it is hardly necessary to look to the mind for the place where the physical sciences stop. The physical sciences are quite capable of coming to a stop all on their own.

À la James

To The Editor:

The older Joseph Epstein gets, the more admirably Jamesian he becomes. His latest offering, "The Philosopher and the Checkout Girl" [Story, November 2004], even with its politically incorrect title, is superb. Long may he flourish.

Sol Schindler
Bethesda, Maryland

Hamilton

To the Editor:

Charles R. Kesler's review of Ron Chernow's biography of Alexander Hamilton is interesting for its echoes of modern American society [Books in Review, November 2004]. But Mr. Kesler does not mention one of the great ironies related to modern views of the founders.

Hamilton has traditionally been associated with the Right because of his leaning toward the efficiencies of executive power, his distrust of popular rule, and his opposition to Thomas Jefferson. Today, however, it is the traditional champions of Thomas Jefferson—the "liberal" Left in America—that show the greatest distrust of the people while pretending to act in their name with an increasingly statist approach to government.

Herb Greer
Salisbury, England

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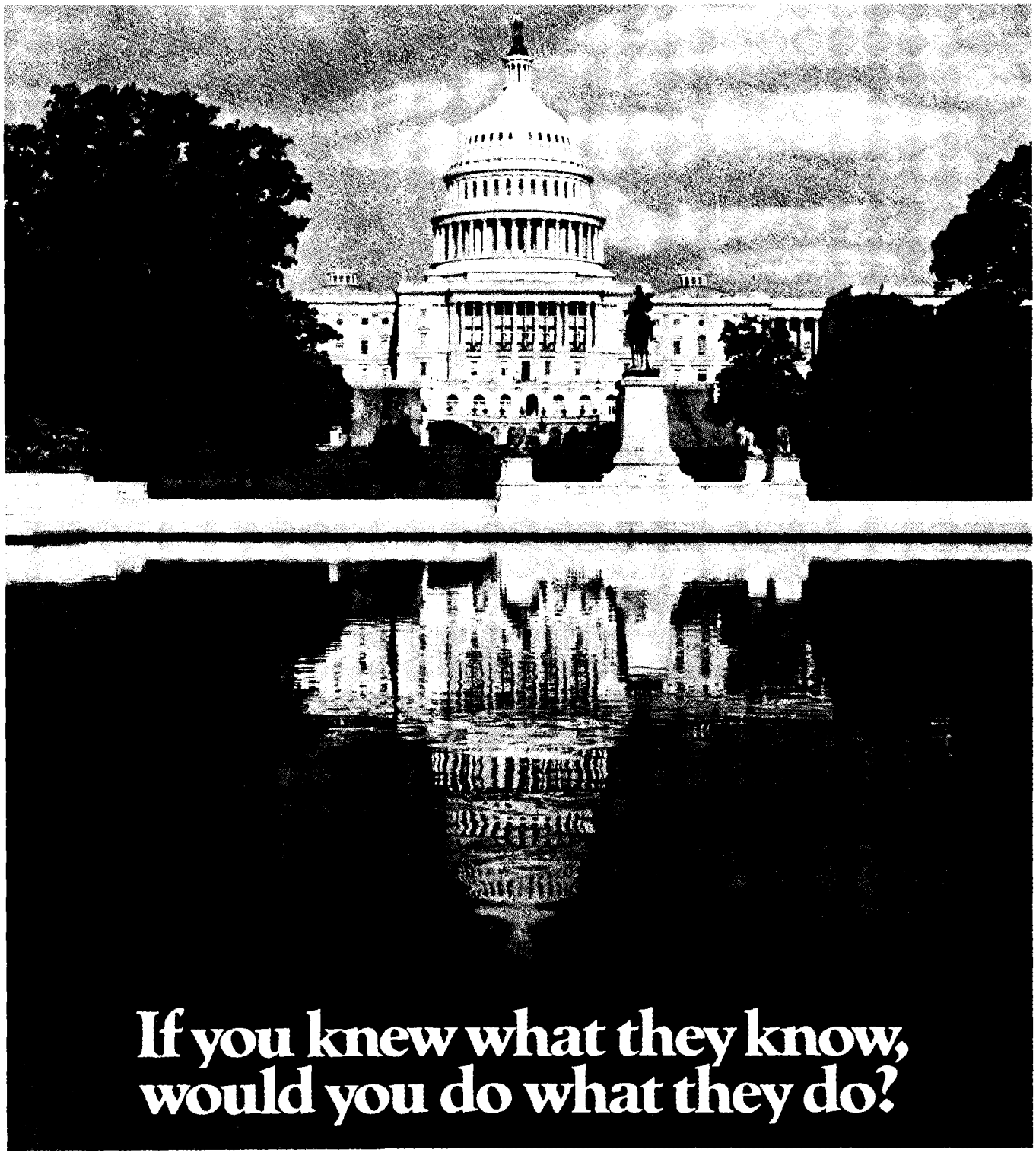

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Commentary
February 2005

The War Against World War IV

Norman Podhoretz

A Second-Term Retreat?

Will George W. Bush spend the next few years backing down from the ambitious strategy he outlined in the Bush Doctrine for fighting and winning World War IV?

To be sure, Bush himself still calls it the "war on terrorism," and has shied away from giving the name World War IV to the great conflict into which we were plunged by 9/11. (World War III, in this accounting, was the cold war.) Yet he has never hesitated to compare the fight against radical Islamism, and the forces nurturing and arming it, with those earlier struggles against Nazism and Communism. Nor has he flinched from suggesting that achieving victory as the Bush Doctrine defines it may take as long as it took to win World War III (which lasted more than four decades—from the promulgation of the Truman Doctrine in 1947 until the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989).

Even more than the Truman Doctrine in its time, the Bush Doctrine was subjected to a ferocious assault by domestic opponents from the moment it was enunciated. Then, when Bush actually started acting on it, the ferocity grew even more intense, finally reaching record levels of vituperation during the presidential campaign. But in defiance of everything that was being thrown at him, and in spite of setbacks in Iraq that posed a serious threat to his reelection, Bush never yielded an inch. Instead of scurrying for protective cover from the assault, he stood out in the open and countered by reaffirming his belief in the soundness of the doctrine as well as his firm intention to stick with it in the years ahead.

Thus, over and over again he said that he would stay the course in Iraq; that he would go on working for the spread of liberty throughout the greater Middle East (and democratic reform as a condition for the establishment of a Palestinian state); that he would continue reserving the right to take preemptive military action against what in his best judgment were gathering dangers to the security of this country; and that he would if necessary do so unilaterally.

Why then, given that he was reelected on this pledge, should a question now be raised about whether he will keep it? And why—more strangely still—should the answer most often be that he is indeed about to renege?

Because, comes the response, whether he likes it or not, and whether he intends to or not, he will simply have no other choice. Either his resolve will be sapped by the knowledge that he lacks the neces-

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sary political support to push any further ahead with the Bush Doctrine; or he will be prevented by a certain "law" of democratic politics governing Presidents who win a second term; or he will (as Irving Kristol famously said of liberals who turned into neoconservatives) be mugged by reality.

War and Moral Values

THE NOTION that the Bush Doctrine lacks solid political backing derives from the widely publicized National Election Pool (NEP) exit poll. According to this poll, more voters (22 percent of the sample) were motivated primarily by a concern with moral values than by anything else, and it was among these voters that Bush did best against his Democratic opponent John F. Kerry; and while he also won overwhelmingly among the smaller group (19 percent) who were mainly worried about terrorism, he lost by a correspondingly large margin with the still smaller proportion (15 percent) who chose Iraq as their paramount concern.

Not surprisingly, the President's liberal opponents have interpreted this poll to mean that the election did not constitute a ratification of the Bush Doctrine. This is why they have been only too happy to second the claim pressed by spokesmen for various groups on the religious Right that Bush won because of the "faith factor" and the mobilization of the faithful around "family issues, including marriage [and] life."

As it happens, a few commentators associated with the religious Right are themselves opposed to the Bush Doctrine, which gives them, too, an incentive for minimizing its role in the President's victory. But even those religious conservatives who support the Bush Doctrine have inadvertently played into the hands of his antagonists, both domestic and foreign. That is, by claiming the lion's share of credit for November 2, they have made it a little easier for the antiwar forces to deny that the election held on that day was a referendum on the Bush Doctrine, and that it has the wind of a solid majority of the American people behind it.

Yet for all its intensity, this entire debate over the relative importance of moral values and the Bush Doctrine may stem from a complete misreading of the polls. For it is not in the least self-evident that the vague category of moral values was taken by the people who participated in the NEP survey merely as embracing abortion and gay marriage alone. On the contrary: in all probability they understood it more broadly to mean the traditionalist culture in general.

Recently the novelist (and former Secretary of the Navy) James Webb has been arguing, convincingly, that this traditionalist culture is rooted in and still fed by the Scots-Irish ethnic group that comprises a very large proportion of the population of the "red" states. It is a group, he writes, whose members are "family-oriented"; they "measure leaders by their personal strength and values"; they "have a 2,000-year-old military tradition"; and they "are deeply patriotic, having consistently supported every war America has fought, and [are] intensely opposed to gun control."

Looked at in this light, what the NEP poll reveals is that the "moral values" voters were in effect endorsing the very qualities needed in a wartime leader. Bush would therefore be justified in concluding (as I strongly suspect he has done) that these voters should be added to, and not posed against, the big percentage that supported him on the issue of terrorism. He would be equally justified in inferring that antiwar zealots must have been heavily represented among the 15 percent for whom Iraq was the burning issue, and that this (along with the relentlessly negative media coverage of the battle there) explained why he lost out by a great margin to John Kerry with that group of voters.[1]

In 2000, Bush surprised everyone by proceeding

[1] The same divergence showed up in a *Washington Post*-ABC News poll taken in December. On the one hand, the *Post* reported, "The President's core political asset, public confidence in his leadership on terrorism, remains intact," and "a slight majority" of the sample also said that the Iraq war had contributed to the long-term security of the United States. On the other hand, a much larger proportion thought that these gains had come at an "unacceptable cost in military casualties." And yet, "A strong majority of Americans . . . support keeping military forces in Iraq until 'civil order is restored,' even in the face of continued U.S. causalities." Even more significantly, the day after 22 people, including 13 American servicemen, were killed in a suicide-bomb attack on their base in Mosul, a headline in the *New York Times* read: "Fighting On Is the Only Option, Americans Say."

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to act boldly even after losing the popular vote to Al Gore. Why then would he become less forceful in pursuing his own policy after besting John Kerry in 2004 by three-and-a-half million votes, and after receiving such vivid evidence that the American people consider him the right man for the job of commander-in-chief in fighting the war on terrorism—which is to say, World War IV?

Post-Election Signals

Which, climbing up the ladder of plausibility, brings us to the second reason that has been advanced for speculating that, willy-nilly, the President will back away from the Bush Doctrine in his new term. In a piece entitled "Governing Against Type," Edward N. Luttwak of the Center for Strategic and International Studies assures us that

> reelected Presidents tend to disappoint their most enthusiastic followers by changing direction: they go Right if they started on the Left (or vice versa); become active when they were passive; turn dovish if they were hawkish; and in all cases converge toward the center of gravity of American politics, as well as toward the mainstream foreign-policy traditions.

In backing up this thesis, Luttwak notes that Ronald Reagan became less rather than more hawkish in his second term, while Bill Clinton, after neglecting foreign policy in his first term, immersed himself in it with a vengeance once he was reelected.

Unlike other commentators, Luttwak does not attribute such turnabouts to "a desire on the part of the President to be more widely loved, or to court the approval of future historians." In his view, the driving force is instead "entropy," or the "natural tendency of democracies to revert to the moderate mean rather than go off the rails." Therefore, even if Bush tries to "go off the rails" (that is, if he insists on sticking with the Bush Doctrine), a kind of natural law of American politics will prevent him from doing so.

What we see here is yet another of those famous "misunderestimations" of George W. Bush. In common with almost every pundit and every inhabitant of every foreign ministry on the face of the earth, Luttwak fails to recognize the exceptionally strong leader America has found in this President, or to take the measure of his boldness, his determination, and his stamina. The poll-driven Bill Clinton may have reverted to "the moderate mean," but Bush, although an immensely skillful politician, is not nearly so poll-driven. And while the Bush Doctrine was certainly inspired and influenced by Ronald Reagan, Bush will just as certainly travel a different road from the one Reagan took in his second term.

During the campaign, at the very moment when things seemed to be going so badly in Iraq that even some previously enthusiastic supporters of the war were jumping ship, and when the abuse being hurled at him was reaching hurricane force, Bush was heard to say, "I'm just gettin' started." That he meant every word of it became clear almost the minute he was reelected.

For openers, having dismayed his more hawkish supporters (myself included) by pulling back from Falluja in April, he now ordered a full-fledged assault on that terrorist stronghold. He also gave the go-ahead to similar operations against other pockets of the insurgency struggling to drive us out of Iraq and to prevent any further progress in the process of democratization.

At the same time, Bush moved with comparable forcefulness against the insurgency within his own administration. First he sent Porter Goss to the CIA with a mandate to clean out the officials there who (apart from providing faulty intelligence) had been hell-bent on sabotaging the Bush Doctrine. And then he turned his attention to the State Department. Under Colin Powell, it, too, had been actively undermining the President's policy to the point where it came to be described by those in a position to know as the "most insubordinate" State Department in American history.

Lawrence Kaplan of the *New Republic* provides a number of blatant examples, of which the most outrageous concerns the very essence of the Bush Doctrine. When, he writes, the President "proposed an ambitious and concrete plan to promote democra-

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cy in the Middle East," the State Department bureaucracy,

> responding to the objections of Arab leaders, watered down the eventual proposals beyond recognition. . . . And when, on the eve of the war in Iraq, Washington distributed talking points in defense of its position to U.S. embassies abroad, several ambassadors in the Middle East cabled back to Foggy Bottom protesting that they would not make the case for war.[2]

In replacing Powell with Condoleezza Rice, Bush was putting Foggy Bottom on notice that such activities would no longer be tolerated. As his National Security Adviser throughout the first term, Rice was a fierce loyalist, and she can now be counted upon to push the State Department bureaucracy into supporting the policies of the President it is supposed to serve instead of setting its face against them.

Or can she? Some "experts" think not. In fact, Kaplan reports that several of her former colleagues were spreading the word that Rice, "far from purging the State Department's ranks," will try to mollify them. Other observers, mindful that Rice cut her teeth in government under Brent Scowcroft—a leading member of the "realist" school (about which more in a moment) and one of the most relentless critics of the Bush Doctrine—have raised doubts about how firmly committed she may be to Bush's "own bent toward idealistic and assertive American missions." Concurring, Edward Luttwak points to "early signals that Ms. Rice will devote serious attention to the Europeans who did not support the Iraq war," and he takes this as additional evidence of an impending drift away from the Bush Doctrine.

These signals, however, such as they are, surely amount to nothing more than diplomatic politesse, no more portending a second-term retreat than the President did when, late last November, he declared that "A new term in office is an important opportunity to reach out to our friends," or announced that the first "great goal" of his second term was to build "effective multinational and multilateral institutions" and to support "effective multilateral action." That Bush was here practicing a little diplomatic politesse of his own was acknowledged by Dana Milbank of the *Washington Post*. The President, Milbank reported, "made clear that such cooperation must occur on his terms, and he did not retreat from the first-term policies that angered some allies." What is more, Bush's bow to "multinational and multilateral institutions" carried a sting in the tail:

> With Canadian Prime Minister Paul Martin sharing the stage, Bush . . . implicitly rebuked Canada and the United Nations for not supporting the invasion of Iraq. "The objective of the UN and other institutions must be collective security, not endless debate," he said. "For the sake of peace, when those bodies promise serious consequences, serious consequences must follow."

Mr. Blair Goes to Washington

AN EVEN more telling indication that there will be no retreat from the Bush Doctrine in the second term—and also that Rice is no longer, if she ever truly was, under the influence of Brent Scowcroft—involves policy toward Israel.

During the campaign, it was widely rumored that if Bush were reelected, he would change course on Israel. The thinking here was that he owed a debt to the British Prime Minister Tony Blair, who had risked his own political career by supporting him on Iraq, and that the currency in which Blair needed this debt to be paid was greater pressure on Israel and more indulgence toward the Palestinians on the part of the United States. Then came the death of the Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat in November. In the eyes of Blair and just about everyone else in the world, this event opened up an exciting new opportunity to restart the stalled "peace process." So off Blair went to Washington on a post-election trip whose purpose, as he himself announced in advance, was to get Bush to do just that.

[2] Evidently it is a not uncommon trick of the bureaucracy to draft such cables in Washington. They are then put into the hands of ambassadors abroad who sign and send them back to Washington as though they were reports from the local scene. It would not be surprising if that is what happened in these cases.

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On several earlier occasions when Bush, after seeming to tilt toward Israel, had then turned on the Jewish state for taking this or that action, it was assumed that he was trying to accommodate Blair (repaying the debt by installments, so to speak). But whether or not this was the case on such occasions, the situation changed dramatically after June 24, 2002. Having realized that, under the terms of his own doctrine, there could be no meaningful peace process so long as the Palestinians were living under the tyrannical, kleptocratic, and murderous regime led by Arafat, Bush now made American support of a Palestinian state contingent upon the emergence of new leaders who would devote themselves to building "entirely new political and economic institutions based on democracy, market economics, and action against terrorism." In the meantime, Israel was justified in defending itself by military and other means, including through the security fence beginning to be built by Prime Minister Ariel Sharon.

Under this new dispensation, Bush or one of his spokesmen might from time to time still chide the Israelis for going too far. But there would be an end to the zigzagging from green light to red that had characterized his position before he found his footing on this issue.

In an effort to get Bush to reverse course again, Blair came in November bearing two proposals designed to resume the old pressures on Israel while relaxing the demands the President was making on the Palestinians. One of these proposals was that Bush dispatch a special envoy to the area, and the other was that he convene an international conference. Contrary to Blair's evident expectations, however, Bush rejected both proposals. He did so politely and gently, but reject them he did. The upshot was that, far from being "paid back" in the currency of pressure on Israel, Blair returned home empty-handed except for Bush's fervent praise of him for participating in the overthrow of Saddam Hussein.

Much as I hate to agree with anything the President of France says, Jacques Chirac was right for once when he sneered that Bush had given Blair nothing for his pains.

Then, sending out a very different signal from the one Edward Luttwak imagined he was hearing, Condoleezza Rice followed suit. In a meeting with Jewish leaders held about a week after Blair's departure, she enthusiastically underlined the President's rejection of the two Blair proposals. Immediately after this, the President once again picked up and ran with the ball: in his speech in Canada, he reiterated in the most unequivocal terms that he was, if anything, more firmly committed than ever to the conditions he had attached on June 24, 2002 to American support for the establishment of a Palestinian state:

> Achieving peace in the Holy Land is not just a matter of pressuring one side or the other on the shape of a border or the site of a settlement. This approach has been tried before without success. As we negotiate the details of peace, we must look to the heart of the matter, which is the need for a Palestinian democracy.

So much for "entropy"; and so much, too, for the idea that once Rice is installed in her new office, she will dependably revert to the tutelage of Brent Scowcroft or morph into another Colin Powell.

Mr. Rumsfeld Stays in Washington

Finally, we come to the most plausible of all the reasons that have been given for predicting (or rather hoping) that Bush will spend his second term backing away from his own doctrine. This one can be summed up in a single word: Iraq.

The idea here is that Iraq represents the first great test to which the Bush Doctrine has been put, and that the count is now in on its miserable failure. The retrograde "red-state voters" may have been hoodwinked by the lies emanating from the White House and the Pentagon and amplified by Rush Limbaugh and the Fox News Channel, but everyone who knows anything knows that Bush's entire foreign policy now lies buried under the rubble of Baghdad and the smaller cities of the Sunni triangle.

Apart from all its other faults, this analysis is vitiated by the implicit assumption that, in his heart of hearts, Bush himself has come to agree with its take on Iraq in particular and the Bush Doctrine in general, and that he will now bow to reality and act ac-

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cordingly. Yet if Bush believes that Iraq has been a disaster, why would he have decided to keep Donald Rumsfeld as his Secretary of Defense?

As the architect of the battle for Iraq, Rumsfeld has been blamed for almost everything that opponents of the invasion (and even some of its vocal supporters) tell us has gone wrong there. He has been accused of underestimating the number of boots that would be needed on the ground; of doing nothing to prevent the looting and the general breakdown of law and order that followed upon the capture of Baghdad; of failing to anticipate, and therefore to deal effectively with, the insurgency that developed; of creating a climate that fostered the mistreatment of prisoners at Abu Ghraib and other such crimes. In short, "having ignored the State Department's postwar planning" (as the *Washington Post* delicately put the conventional wisdom in its story on Rumsfeld's reappointment), he led this country into a great debacle that has discredited the very policy whose viability it was intended to prove.

But if Bush accepted this version of how and why the battle for Iraq has gone and is going, it is unthinkable that he would have come down on the side of the adviser supposedly responsible for all the "mistakes" and "crimes" instead of embracing Powell, the putatively wise counselor whose spurned advice could have averted the whole disaster.

Insurgents

ALL THINGS considered, then, I feel safe in predicting that Bush will not reverse course in his second term, and that he will continue striving to implement the doctrine bearing his name throughout the greater Middle East—that, in short, he will go on "sticking to his guns, literally and figuratively," as *Time* put it in naming him "Person of the Year." But I feel equally safe in predicting that the forces opposing him, both in the region and at home, will persist in their struggle to nip this immense enterprise in the bud.

In Iraq, the insurgents—a coalition of diehard Saddamists, domestic Islamofascists, and foreign jihadists—have a simple objective. They are trying to drive us out before the seeds of democratization that we are helping to sow have taken firm root and begun to flower. Only thus can the native insurgents hope to recapture the power they lost when we toppled Saddam; and only thus can the Iranians, the Syrians, and the Saudis, who have been dispatching and/or financing the foreign jihadists, escape becoming the next regimes to go the way of Saddam's under the logic of the Bush Doctrine.

The despots tyrannizing these countries all know perfectly well that an American failure in Iraq would rule out the use of military force against them. They know that it would rob other, non-military measures of any real effectiveness. And they know that it would put a halt to the wave of reformist talk that has been sweeping through the region since the promulgation of the Bush Doctrine and that poses an unprecedented threat to their own hold on political power, just as it does to the religious and cultural power of the radical Islamists.

But the most important thing the insurgents and their backers in the neighboring despotisms know is that the battle for Iraq will not be won or lost in Iraq; it will be won or lost in the United States of America. On this they agree entirely with General John Abizaid, the commander of the U.S. Central Command, who recently told reporters touring Iraq: "It is all about staying the course. No military effort that anyone can make against us is going to be able to throw us out of this region." Is it any wonder, then, that the insurgents were praying for the victory of John F. Kerry—which they all assumed would mean an American withdrawal—or that the reelection of Bush—which they were not fooled by any exit polls into interpreting as anything other than a ratification of the Bush Doctrine—came as such a great blow to them?

But too much is at stake in Iraq for them to give up now, especially as they are confident that they still have an excellent shot at getting the American public to conclude that the game is not worth the candle. General Abizaid again: "We have nothing to fear from this enemy except its ability to create panic . . . and gain a media victory." To achieve this

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species of victory—and perhaps inspired by the strategy that worked so well for the North Vietnamese[3]—they are counting on the forces opposing the Bush Doctrine at home. These forces comprise just as motley a coalition as the one fighting in Iraq, and they are, after their own fashion, just as desperate. For they too understand how much they for their own part stand to lose if the Bush Doctrine is ever generally judged to have passed the great test to which it has been put in Iraq.

Isolationism, Right and Left

Consider—to begin once more on the lowest rung of the ladder—the isolationists of the paleoconservative Right. Their line is that a conspiracy of "neoconservative" (i.e., Jewish) officials holed up in the White House and the Pentagon is dragging this country, against its own interests, into one conflict after another with the sole purpose of "making the Middle East safe for Israel."

The words come from the pen of this group's leading spokesman, Patrick J. Buchanan, who expatiates in characteristically pungent terms:

> *Cui bono*? For whose benefit these endless wars in a region that holds nothing vital to America save oil, which the Arabs must sell us to survive? Who would benefit from a war of civilizations between the West and Islam? Answer: one nation, one leader, one party. Israel, Sharon, Likud.

Buchanan also claims, on the basis of one of Osama bin Laden's *fatwas*, that a major cause of 9/11 was "the United States' uncritical support of the Ariel Sharon regime in Israel."

This screed has elicited a trenchant comment from James Taranto of the *Wall Street Journal*'s website *OpinionJournal*:

> Sharon was elected prime minister of Israel in 2001, three years after the *fatwa* that, according to Buchanan, condemned his "regime." . . . Labor's Ehud Barak won election in 1999, and that didn't stop al Qaeda from attacking the *USS Cole* in October 2000, even as President Clinton was struggling to broker an Israeli-Palestinian peace deal.

In addition,

> Al Qaeda's first attacks on American targets were in Yemen in 1992 and at the World Trade Center in 1993—at a time when Labor's Yitzhak Rabin was Israel's prime minister. Rabin later reached an accommodation with Arafat. . . . Bin Laden does not appear to have been appeased.

Buchanan's writings, emitting as they do an unmistakable whiff of anti-Semitism, have already marginalized the paleoconservative isolationists. If the Bush Doctrine passes its test in Iraq, there will be fewer and fewer ears to hear what will more and more sound like the crackpot talk it always was.

So, too, with the isolationists of the hard Left. These—exactly like their forebears in the late 1930's who fought against America's entry into World War II—have made common cause with the paleoconservatives at the other end of the political spectrum. True, the isolationism of the Left stems from the conviction that America is bad for the rest of the world, whereas the isolationism of the Right is based on the belief that the rest of the world is bad for America. Nevertheless, the two streams have converged, flowing smoothly into the same channel of fierce opposition to everything Bush has done in response to 9/11.

In the years before 9/11, Noam Chomsky, Buchanan's counterpart on the Left, was very largely forgotten. After achieving great prominence in the 1960's, he had come to seem too extreme—or perhaps too naked in his hatred of America—to serve the purposes of the *New York Review of Books*, through whose pages he had first made his political mark. But after 9/11 he found a newly receptive audience for his contention that this country had brought the terrorist attacks down upon its own head, and for his denunciations of our response to those attacks as nothing more than the latest stage in the malignant imperialism of which he had long since been accusing the United States.

[3] Bui Tin, who served on the general staff of the North Vietnamese army, told the *Wall Street Journal* after his retirement that the antiwar movement in the United States was "essential to our strategy."

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Like Buchanan, Chomsky will go on railing against the Bush Doctrine for as long as his lungs hold out. So will Michael Moore and all the other hard leftists holed up in Hollywood, the universities, and in the intellectual community at large. Fixated as they are on the idea that America is the greatest force for evil in the world, they will always apologize for or side with—sometimes openly, sometimes only tacitly—any totalitarian despot, no matter how murderous, provided only that he is ranged against the United States. To these people, as they themselves cannot but recognize, an American success in Iraq will mean the loss of their mass audience and a return to the narrow sectarian ghetto from which they were able to break out after 9/11.

Superhawks

WITH NO mass audience to lose, no such worry bothers the exponents of another line of attack on the Bush Doctrine that has emanated from a neighborhood on the Right where utter ruthlessness is considered the only way to wage war, and where the idea of exporting democracy is thought to conflict with conservative political wisdom. On the Right though it obviously is, this neighborhood of superhawks is as distant from the precincts of paleoconservatism as it is from the redoubts of the anti-American Left.

The most prolific member of the group is Angelo M. Codevilla who, in a series of essays in the *Claremont Review of Books*, has accused the Bush administration of "eschewing victory" by shying away from "energetic policies that might actually produce" it, and who makes no bones about his belief that we are losing the war as a result. In the same vein, and in the same magazine, Mark Helprin writes that we have failed

> adequately to prepare for war, to declare war, rigorously to define the enemy, to decide upon disciplines and intelligent war aims, to subjugate the economy to the common defense, or even to endorse the most elemental responsibilities of government.

In then piling a commensurate heap of scorn on the idea of transforming "the entire Islamic world into a group of peaceful democratic states" (Helprin), these two eloquent and fiery polemicists are joined by the more temperate Charles R. Kesler, the editor of the *Claremont Review*. If democratization is to succeed in the regimes of the Islamic world, a necessary precondition is to beat these regimes into "complete submission" and then occupy them "for decades—not just for months or years, but for decades" (Kesler). Even then, our troops may have to "stay and die . . . indefinitely on behalf of a mission . . . concerning the accomplishment of which there is little knowledge and less agreement" (Codevilla).

Of all the attacks on the Bush Doctrine, this set of arguments is the only one that resonates with me, at least on the issue of how to wage war. I have no objection in principle to the ruthlessness the superhawks advocate, and I agree that it would likely be very effective. The trouble is that the more closely I look at their position, the more clearly does it emerge as fatally infected by the disease of utopianism—the very disease that usually fills critics of this stripe with revulsion and fear.

When these critics prescribe all-out war—total mobilization at home, total ruthlessness on the battlefield—they posit a world that does not exist, at least not in America or in any other democratic country. To the extent that they bother taking account of the America that actually does exist, it is only its imperfections and deficiencies they notice; and these, along with the constraints imposed by the character of the nation on its elected leaders, they wave off with derisive language, as when Codevilla refers sarcastically to "the lowest common denominator among domestic American political forces."

Yet while Codevilla, writing in his study, is free to advise ruthless suppression of these limiting conditions, no one sitting in the Oval Office can possibly do so. And even so, the wonder is not, contrary to Mark Helprin, how "irresolute" and "inept" Bush has been but how far he has managed to go and how much he has already accomplished

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while working within those constraints and around those imperfections.

As for democratization, Kesler is of course right: it is a hard thing to do, and it cannot be done overnight. But recognizing this truth is a very far cry from suggesting that it cannot be done at all unless the most stringent conditions are met. The conservative skepticism Kesler preaches on texts from Montesquieu and John Adams is all very well in the abstract; in practice, decades need not be required to get a process under way—to clear the ground and sow the seeds and help to water them as they flower and grow.

Unlike all other opponents of the Bush Doctrine, the superhawks are not driven by the fear that they will be discredited if the Bush Doctrine should succeed, if only because none of them imagines that a strategy based on so many false premises, and so much timidity and weakness, ever can or ever will succeed. Therefore they can be depended upon to go on excoriating those policies no matter what.

Liberal Internationalists

Moving now away from the margins and closer to the center, we come to one of the neighborhoods inhabited by the foreign-policy establishment.

Here—housed in bodies like the Council on Foreign Relations, the Brookings Institution, and the Carnegie Endowment, and surrounded by the populous community of non-governmental organizations (NGO's)—live the liberal internationalists, with their virtually religious commitment to negotiations as the best, or indeed the only, way to resolve conflicts; their relentless faith in the UN (which they stubbornly persist in seeing as the great instrument of collective security even though its record is marked by "an unwillingness to get serious about preventing deadly violence"[4]); and their corresponding squeamishness about military force. Among their most sophisticated spokesmen are Stanley Hoffmann of Harvard, Charles A. Kupchan of the Council on Foreign Relations, and G. John Ikenberry of Georgetown.

Under Jimmy Carter (whose Secretary of State, Cyrus R. Vance, was a devout member of this school) and to a lesser extent under Bill Clinton, the liberal internationalists were at the very heart of American foreign policy. But while George W. Bush has thrown a rhetorical bone or two in their direction, and has even done them the kindness of making a few ceremonial bows to the UN, he has for all practical purposes written off the liberal-internationalist school. Nor has he been coy about this. As he declared in a speech at West Point on June 1, 2002:

> We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign nonproliferation treaties, and then systematically break them.

The liberal internationalists were not slow to pick up on what statements like this held in store for them. While Kupchan thought that a number of other forces had already weakened their position before, it was, he said flatly, "the election of George W. Bush [that] sounded the death-knell for liberal internationalism" (defined by him as "a moderate, centrist internationalism that manages the international system through compromise, consensus, and international institutions"). Ikenberry, on the other hand, blamed Bush alone:

> [A] set of hard-line, fundamentalist ideas have taken Washington by storm and provided the intellectual rationale for a radical post-11 September reorientation of American foreign policy. . . . [This] is not leadership but a geostrategic wrecking ball that will destroy America's own half-century-old international architecture.

What Ikenberry does not say is that, thanks to the workings of this "wrecking ball," the liberal internationalists have been reduced to a domestic echo chamber for the French and the Germans. All they seem able to do is count the ways in which the "unilateral" invasion of Iraq has done "damage to

[4] This, surprisingly, is from the report of "The High-Level Panel on Threats, Challenges, and Changes" recently issued by the UN itself.

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the country's international position—its prestige, credibility, security partnerships, and the goodwill of other countries" (Ikenberry). Since they refuse even to consider whether 9/11 demanded a "reorientation"—whether, that is, it demonstrated that "the tools and doctrines of the [old] system had outlived their utility" and had to be replaced with a "new set of rules for managing the emerging threats to international security"[5] —they can hope for nothing better than a reversion to the status quo ante.

This dream, thinks Stanley Hoffmann, could yet be realized by a scuttling of the Bush Doctrine through a withdrawal from Iraq that

> would bring about a reconciliation with friends and allies shocked by Washington's recent unilateralism and repudiation of international obligations, and thus do much to restore . . . American credibility and "soft power" in the world.

As against Hoffmann, neither Ikenberry nor Kupchan envisages so rosy a future for their common creed, even in the exceedingly unlikely event that the Bush Doctrine is abandoned. If, however, the doctrine should be vindicated by Iraq, they all fear—and rightly so—that it will be almost impossible, in Kupchan's words, to "bring the U.S. back to a liberal brand of internationalism." Or, I would add, to bring its exponents back to the center of the foreign-policy establishment.

Realists

BUT OF all the groups making up the coalition against the Bush Doctrine, the one with the most to lose is the realists.[6]

The realist perspective is shaped by two related precepts. The first is that in international affairs the great desideratum is stability, which can be achieved only through a proper balance of power. Following from this is a very old principle, going all the way back to the arrangements of the 16th century that allowed for more or less peaceful coexistence among perennially warring Catholic and Protestant principalities. In its original form this principle was expressed in the Latin motto "*cuius regio eius religio*" (the religion of the ruler is the religion of the region). Translated into secular terms, it holds that the internal character of a sovereign state is strictly its own affair, and only the actions it takes beyond its own borders are the business of any other state.

In contrast to the liberal internationalists, the realists are not in the least squeamish about the use of force. But under the dictates of their basic principles, force is justified only in repelling another state's aggressive effort to upset a previously stable balance of power, while to make war in order to institute "regime change" is almost always both wrong and foolish. A good example of these dictates at work was the first Gulf war, when George W. Bush's father, with Brent Scowcroft as his National Security Adviser, used force to undo Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait but stopped short of removing him from power in Iraq.

Until 9/11, the realists undoubtedly represented the single most influential school of thought in the world of foreign policy, with all others considered naïve or dangerous or both (though a patronizing pass might occasionally be given to liberal internationalists). It would not be going too far to say that for everyone of any great importance in that world, whether as a theorist or a practitioner, the realist perspective was axiomatic. And being, as it were, the default position, it was almost automatically adopted by George W. Bush, too, in his pre-9/11 incarnation. But on 9/11, Bush's more or less reflexive realism took so great a hit that it collapsed in flames just as surely as did the Twin Towers.

Bush made no secret of his repudiation of realism, and he did not pussyfoot around it:

> For decades, free nations tolerated oppression

[5] The quotation is from a very interesting piece in the *Wall Street Journal* by Raja Mohan, professor of South Asian studies at Jawaharlal Nehru University in New Delhi, who explains why India, unlike Germany and France, and the liberal internationalists in the United States, is an enthusiastic supporter of the Bush Doctrine.

[6] The term derives, of course, from the German *Realpolitik*, which does not in itself convey the impression, as the English name "realism" does, that it is necessarily more realistic than other perspectives. Under certain circumstances, it may well be; under others, as we will soon see below, it most definitely is not.

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> in the Middle East for the sake of stability. In practice, this approach brought little stability and much oppression, so I have changed this policy.

That took care of the first guiding precept of the realist perspective. And Bush was equally forthright—almost brutal—in giving the back of his hand to the realist prohibition against using force to transform the internal character of other states:

> Some who call themselves realists question whether the spread of democracy in the Middle East should be any concern of ours. But the realists in this case have lost contact with a fundamental reality: America has always been less secure when freedom is in retreat; America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

Farewell, then, to *cuius regio eius religio* as well.

What Bush was declaring here was a revolutionary change in the rules of the international game. If we are to grasp the full significance of this change, we have to start by recognizing that the invasion of Afghanistan was only a partial application of the new doctrine. Because the terrorists who had attacked us were based in Afghanistan, and were protected and supported by the Taliban regime ruling that country, going after it did not constitute a preemptive strike. It represented, rather, a conventional retaliation against an unconventional aggression: they hit us and we hit back.

Being nothing new, the invasion itself was not opposed in principle by the realists (even though some of them considered it crazy to think that we could win where so many other armies—most recently the Russians—had come a cropper). But the operation in Afghanistan did begin to conflict in principle with the realist perspective when it went beyond toppling the Taliban regime to sponsoring a replacement government pledged to democratization.

Still, the main criticism leveled by the realists at this point took a prudential form: our political objective, they said, was even more foolhardy than our military effort. This suggests that they were slower than the liberal internationalists in fully grasping what Bush was throwing at them. Probably unable to imagine that he could possibly be serious when he talked about reshaping the political character of the entire region, they seem to have consoled themselves with the notion that Afghanistan was just a one-shot overreaction to 9/11.

If so, they were soon to be stripped of this cold comfort by the invasion of Iraq. And even then, it still took another while before the realists felt the full force of the gale being whipped up by George W. Bush. What caused the additional delay was the almost exclusive focus of the debate over Iraq on weapons of mass destruction.

WMD vs. Draining the Swamps

When Bush charged Saddam Hussein with refusing to give up his weapons of mass destruction, he was relying in good faith on what the CIA—and every other intelligence agency in the world—assured him was the case. He was also acting in good faith when he warned that Saddam might put such weapons into the hands of terrorists, and when he then invoked this danger in an advance justification of the new policy of preemption ("If we wait for threats to fully materialize, we will have waited too long").

But there would be a heavy price to pay for placing so much stress on the issue of WMD. Not only did the failure to find them severely injure the case for invading Iraq; perhaps even more injurious was that the emphasis on WMD obscured the long-range strategic rationale for the invasion. For while the immediate objective was indeed to disarm Saddam Hussein, the larger one was to press on with "draining the swamps"—whether created by religious despots, as in Afghanistan, or by secular tyrants, as in Iraq—that were in Bush's view the breeding-grounds of terrorism in the greater Middle East. Nor could those swamps be drained only by strong-arming the regimes under which they had been festering. It was also necessary in this view to replace these regimes with elected governments that would work to fulfill the hopes of "the peoples of the Islamic nations [who] who want and deserve the same freedoms and opportunities as people in every nation."

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All this pretty much disappeared from the debate over Iraq in the months before the invasion. Nevertheless, it gradually sank in among the realists that they had been wrong in dismissing Afghanistan as a one-shot affair, and that disarming Saddam was not the be-all or the end-all of the invasion of Iraq. Hard though it was for them, they finally had to face up to the incredible fact that Bush had not just been making rhetorical noises when he said that his ultimate strategic aim was to push all the states in the greater Middle East—every last one of them—toward democracy.

Worse yet, there was no dissuading him by argument, not even when close advisers of his father like Brent Scowcroft and James Baker were telling him that it was a mistake to invade Iraq. Brainwashed (as the realists along with many others had concluded) by the neoconservative ideologues who had wormed their way into his mind, he refused to recognize that by far the most important obstacle to solving all our problems in the Middle East was not Saddam Hussein but Ariel Sharon. And he remained calmly impervious to the objection that pursuing his new doctrine of democratization would destabilize the region (maddeningly, he even responded that this was exactly what he *wanted* to do) and would also increase rather than lessen the danger of terrorism.

An interesting wrinkle in the story of the realist offensive against the Bush Doctrine is that it did not enlist the services of Henry Kissinger, the universally acknowledged leader of that school. Most of his disciples—including such prominent former assistants of his in the Nixon and Ford administrations as Scowcroft and Lawrence Eagleburger (later to become Secretary of State himself under the first George Bush)—lined up against the invasion of Iraq. But Kissinger himself, after hesitating a bit, came out in favor of using force against Saddam; and once the battle had begun, he was adamant about the need to stay the course and win. In sharp contrast to his less flexible students, Kissinger understood that what was at stake in the greater Middle East was American credibility, and that the loss of this credibility would constitute the worst imaginable threat to the very stability that realists were supposed to pursue.

Given his special take on Iraq—and even though he remained deeply skeptical about the short- or even medium-term prospects for democracy there and in the region at large—Kissinger did not and would not add his voice to the campaign against the Bush Doctrine mounted by other realists in the innumerable articles and books that came pouring out of them.[7] These polemics, like those of the liberal internationalists, were on the whole more restrained in tone than the ravings of the isolationists—more patronizing than hysterical—but in substance and underneath the surface they were no less apocalyptic.

Rooting for Defeat

THIS COMES through with great clarity in a long and highly sympathetic survey of books attacking the Bush Doctrine that were produced before the election by a mixed bag of realists and liberal internationalists who mostly reside in the academy.[8] Entitled "A Dissenter's Guide to Foreign Policy" and published in *World Policy Journal*, the survey was written by David C. Hendrickson, a professor of political science at Colorado College and a member of the Coalition for a Realistic Foreign Policy.

Hendrickson begins by implicitly placing the things America has done under George W. Bush on a par with the "iniquities" of the Soviet Union under Stalin, from "the horrors of collectivization, the show trials, the devouring of the children of the Revolution in purges and assassinations" and up through "the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939." For just as all this caused many Communists elsewhere to lose their faith in the benevolence of the Soviet Union, so, to the realists and the liberal internationalists surveyed by Hendrickson,

[7] It is interesting to note that Hans J. Morgenthau, who was the leading academic realist of the 1950's, violently assailed the Truman Doctrine for refusing to recognize the limits of American power. Morgenthau denounced Truman as a liar and a demagogue, and predicted that he would end up in disgrace. Kissinger is making no such mistake about Bush.

[8] They include, among several others, *America Unbound: The Bush Revolution in American Foreign Policy* by Ivo Daalder and James M. Lindsay; *Fear's Empire: War, Terrorism, and Democracy* by Benjamin R. Barber; and *Rogue Nation: American Unilateralism and the Failure of Good Intentions* by Clyde Prestowitz.

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> the sheer enormity of what the Bush administration was attempting provoked a fundamental reevaluation of the belief that the United States was essentially, and despite imperfections, a tremendous force for good in the world. For them, as indeed for this reviewer, that proposition is now in grave doubt.

To which all one can say is that if, because of the "unholy propensities" of the Bush Doctrine, the end of America as a force for good is about to descend upon us, it will arrive in the form of an attack by terrorists armed with weapons of mass destruction, and that such an attack is far more likely to occur if these "unholy propensities" are prevented from working themselves out than if they are allowed to take their course. But what is certainly true is that if these same "unholy propensities" succeed, the realists (like the liberal internationalists) will be confronted with the impending end of *their* world. In the unkindest cut of all, their ideas will come to be dismissed as, precisely, unrealistic, and their standing will suffer a possibly fatal blow.

Before November 2, some realists had feared that Bush's reelection would, in Hendrickson's words, "confirm and ratify the revolutionary changes he has introduced to U.S. strategy." Having calmed down a bit since then, they are now hoping to avert the apocalypse through another possible outcome that some of them envisaged before November 2: namely, that "once revolutionary zeal collides with hard reality, . . . the Bush policies . . . will end in tears."

One can only admire Hendrickson's candor in admitting what is usually hotly denied: that even many leading realists, along with many liberal internationalists, are rooting for an American defeat. Direct action not being their style, they will not participate in the "mass demonstrations and civil disobedience" advocated by Tom Hayden, who advises following the playbook of the "peace" movement of the 60's (of which he was one of the chief organizers) as the way to get us out of Iraq. But neither will they sit back passively and wait for "hard reality" to ensure that the Bush Doctrine "ends in tears."

Instead of taking to the streets, the realists and the liberal internationalists will go back to their word processors and redouble their ongoing efforts to turn public opinion against the Bush Doctrine. Mainly they will try to do so by demonstrating over and over again that the doctrine is already failing its first great encounter with "hard reality" in Iraq.

"All the News That Fits Their Spin"[9]

Along the way, they will get more than a little help from their de-facto allies on both political flanks and from acolytes in the media like Chris Hedges of the *New York Times* (writing on this occasion in the *New York Review of Books* a few weeks after Bush's reelection):

> We are losing the war in Iraq. There has been a steady increase in the assaults carried out by the insurgents against coalition forces. . . . We are an isolated and reviled nation. We are tyrants to others weaker than ourselves. We have lost sight of our democratic ideals.

Like Hedges, the various groups within the anti-Bush coalition will continue to pronounce topsy-turvy judgments of this kind (the most startling being Hedges's claim that a policy whose heart and soul is the spread of democracy signifies that "we have lost sight of our democratic ideals"). Like Hedges, too, they will make the most of every piece of bad news, every kidnapping, beheading, and bombing, coming out of Iraq. And if by some unhappy chance the news is not bad enough or sufficiently plentiful in its own right, they will exaggerate its dimensions or misrepresent its significance.

This is exactly the game they have been playing since we first went into Iraq. For instance, when looting broke out in Baghdad shortly after the city had fallen to American troops in April 2003, opponents of the war blamed the Pentagon. But as hardly anyone bothered to notice, this may well have been the first time in the history of warfare that

[9] I owe this quip to Chris Weiskopf of the *American Enterprise*, who coined it in a play on the famous motto of the *New York Times* ("All the News That's Fit to Print").

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looting was carried out not by the invading army but by the local populace—acting, moreover, against the wishes of the invading army itself.[10]

An even more egregious case of how bad news has been exaggerated and distorted was the scandal of Abu Ghraib, where a half-dozen or so American guards had inflicted humiliations—mostly of a sexual nature—on a few Iraqi prisoners. And yet Senator Edward M. Kennedy equated Abu Ghraib with Saddam's jails, where untold numbers were physically tortured and murdered; former Vice President Al Gore compared it to Stalin's Gulag, where literally millions died of starvation and disease; and the financier George Soros said that it was as bad as the attacks of 9/11.

A more recent example of exaggeration and distortion turned up in a piece in the *Washington Post* by Brian Gifford, a research fellow at the University of California. According to Gifford,

> the focus on how "light" casualties have been so far . . . serves to rationalize the continued conduct of the war and prevents us as a nation from confronting the realities of conditions in Iraq.

This claim—that American casualties in Iraq have *not* been proportionately light by historical standards—was ridiculous on its face (compare the 6,600 men who died on D-Day alone in World War II with the approximately 1,000 killed in combat over the entire span of the battle of Iraq), and it was soon shown to rest on faulty statistics and mathematical miscalculations.[11]

Then, at the crest of the latest wave of distortion and defeatism, came two classified and rather gloomy documents that were leaked by the CIA to the *New York Times*. Never mind that the agency had all along been leaking similarly morbid assessments of the situation in Iraq and even authorizing direct attacks on the Bush Doctrine from within.[12] Never mind that the agency's new director, Porter Goss, had just distributed a memorandum in which he had to instruct CIA employees not to "identify with, support, or champion opposition to the administration and its policies." Never mind that these latest reports amounted to nothing more than the personal opinions of officials with whom other officials on the scene strongly disagreed. Never mind that the CIA has been wrong about almost everything connected with Iraq, from the question of whether Saddam possessed weapons of mass destruction to the role of Ahmad Chalabi.[13]

In spite of all this, the two new reports were still reverently touted as "an unvarnished assessment" on "matters of politics, economics, and security" that was self-evidently more credible than the optimistic "public picture being offered by the Bush administration."

As THE anti-Bush coalition goes on exaggerating the bad news through such distortions and overstatements,[14] it will simultaneously go on ignoring the good news coming out of Iraq. Nothing will be heard from these quarters about the progress being made in getting a free political system going, in reconstructing the economy, and in establishing law and order throughout most of the country, even as the more aggressive measures being taken against the insurgency are having an effect within the Sunni triangle.[15] Since such news does not jibe with the antiwar coalition's take on Iraq, it does not qualify as "hard reality."

As I write these words, about a month before elections are scheduled to be held in Iraq, the insurgency is stepping up its murderous campaign to frighten people away from the polls and to force a postponement. My guess is that these terrorist attacks (which took the lives of more than 60 Iraqi civilians on a single day in December) will not succeed, and that even if they do, the postponement

[10] It also turned out that the number of archeological treasures stolen from the Iraqi National Museum was not, as repeated over and over again, 17,000 but well under 1,000, and that many of these were reproductions.

[11] The exposure was the work of a blogger named Donald Sensing, and his article was posted on the website RealClearPolitics.com.

[12] The most notorious was a book written under the pseudonym "Anonymous" by CIA analyst Michael Scheuer and then cleared for publication by his superiors.

[13] Commenting on his experience as a member of the 9/11 Commission, former Secretary of the Navy John Lehman wrote that he was surprised by many things its investigation discovered, but not by what it learned about the CIA: "Those of us who had served in the government knew that you could pretty well count on our intelligence community to be wrong in assessing many potential threats."

[14] Not to mention fabrications, a striking instance of which is cited by Gabriel Schoenfeld in the December 2004 COMMENTARY. Schoenfeld tells us that Seymour Hersh has lectured about an atrocity reminiscent of the massacre at My Lai (which Hersh uncovered as a reporter in Vietnam and from which he made his reputation). No evidence whatsoever exists to corroborate this allegation.

[15] I refer anyone interested in detailed documentation to the Australian blogger Arthur Chrenkoff, who has regularly been posting a "roundup of the past two weeks' good news from Iraq" on chrenkoff.blogspot.com. The *Wall Street Journal*'s editorial department has also been posting these reports on its own website. There are now a large number of bloggers in Iraq itself, who collectively convey a sense of life there—of people working and building and arguing and playing—that is entirely different from the one painted by our own media. Iraqthemodel.blogspot.com is a good place to start.

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will not be indefinite and elections will take place sooner rather than later.[16]

Suppose, then (as I do), that in a year or so, a duly elected coalition government is in place in Baghdad; that it is guided by a constitution guaranteeing political freedom and minority rights; that the economy is improving; that Iraqi soldiers and policemen have taken over most of the responsibility for dealing with a severely weakened insurgency; that the number of American troops has been reduced to the size of a backup force; and that fewer and fewer Americans are being killed or wounded. What then? Will the realists and their liberal allies bow to *this* reality? Will *they* be mugged by reality?

I think not. I think they will do unto a success in Iraq what they did when Hamid Karzai was sworn in as the president of Afghanistan this past December. In a powerful report on how the press chose to cover that story, Peter H. Wehner of the White House Office of Strategic Initiatives reminds us of what the realists always said about Afghanistan: that it "was too backward; too fractious; too medieval and religiously fanatical; and too ungovernable to ever move toward democracy." Yet only three years after the war to liberate Afghanistan from the horrific Taliban regime, "a free election was held and a civilized, modern, pro-American president was sworn in." Wehner then describes how the press treated what he calls "this momentous event":

> The *New York Times* carried the story on page A8. *The Washington Post* carried the story on page A13. *USA Today* had the briefest mention possible on page A5. The *Los Angeles Times* carried the story on page A3.

But merely burying the story was not good enough for the news pages of the *Wall Street Journal* (whose point of view is much closer to that of the *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* than to the conservative position of the *Journal*'s own editorial page). The paper's coverage, carried in the "What's News" column, consisted entirely of a one-sentence mention that "Karzai was sworn in as Afghanistan's president," immediately followed by this: "Taliban rebels attacked a military base near the Pakistani borders, killing four soldiers. U.S. troops killed two assailants." And the *Los Angeles Times* went the *Journal* one better by taking the occasion to dwell on how much opium is still being produced in Afghanistan.

The syndicated columnist Charles Krauthammer summed it up pithily:

> What has happened in Afghanistan is nothing short of a miracle. . . . [A]nd what do liberals have to say about this singular achievement by the Bush administration? That Afghanistan is growing poppies. Good grief. This is news? "Afghanistan grows poppies" is the sun rising in the east. "Afghanistan inaugurates democratically elected president" is the sun rising in the west. Afghanistan has always grown poppies. What is President Bush supposed to do? Send 100,000 GI's to eradicate the crop and incite a popular rebellion?

Concluding that "Afghanistan is the first graduate of the Bush Doctrine of spreading democracy in rather hostile places," Krauthammer laments that instead of being greeted with so much as a moment of celebration, it has been either denigrated or sent down the memory hole.

Not, however, by Hamid Karzai himself, who had the following largely unreported words to say on "graduation day":

> Whatever we have achieved in Afghanistan—the peace, the election, the reconstruction, the life that the Afghans are living today in peace, the children going to school, the businesses, the fact that Afghanistan is again a respected member of the international community—is from the help that the United States of America gave us. Without that help Afghanistan would be in the hands of terrorists—destroyed, poverty-stricken, and without its children going to school or getting an education. We are very, very grateful, to put it in the simple words that we know, to the people of the United States of America for bringing us this day.

Long before "graduation day," of course, enemies of the Bush Doctrine who were banking on it to crash and burn had already begun shifting most of their chips from Afghanistan to Iraq, which was looking like a much more promising bet. Now, with so much riding on a failure in Iraq, no effort will be spared to make sure that even a victory there ends up being defined as a defeat.

Impossible? Take a look at the story of the Tet offensive mounted by the Communists in Vietnam in 1968.

[16] When asked in a poll of 5,000 Iraqis taken on December 15 in and around Baghdad, "Do you support postponing the election?," 80 percent said no, and only 18 percent said yes. When asked "Do you think the elections will take place as scheduled?," 83 percent said yes, and only 13 percent said no. The *Washington Post*-ABC News poll cited above found that a smaller majority of Americans, though skeptical about what the elections might accomplish, also wanted them to go forward on schedule.

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The Lesson of Tet

AT THE time, American officials asserted—and the evidence was there to back them up—that the offensive had ended in military defeat for the North Vietnamese and their Vietcong surrogates. But the almost universal impression created by press and television coverage was of a defeat instead for the Americans and the South Vietnamese. On every point the situation was misrepresented by misleading stories and pictures and even by outright falsehood.

Thus the media continued to harp on the successes of Hanoi even after the North's assault on South Vietnamese cities had been blunted; they spoke of rural areas having fallen under Communist control that were in fact being held by American and South Vietnamese forces; they said that the South Vietnamese troops in the provinces were refusing to fight when in fact they were refusing to cave in; and so forth and so on. To top it all off, when the American commander, General William Westmoreland, or President Lyndon Johnson, or any of their spokesmen tried to counter these false impressions, they were ridiculed for "singing the same old song" of progress and optimism that had already exposed them as a pack of liars.[17]

The same triumph of spin over reality is what the enemies of the Bush Doctrine will desperately try to achieve if (or when) Iraq proves to be a success. Of course, things are a little different now. In 1968, when Walter Cronkite, speaking in his characteristically solemn tones from the anchor chair of the CBS *Evening News*, endorsed the view that Tet had been a defeat for us, Johnson realized that there was nothing further he could do to counter this blatant falsehood, and that he himself was for all practical purposes finished. But with the rise of alternatives to the mainstream media like talk radio, Fox News, and the blogosphere, when in 2004 Cronkite's successor, Dan Rather, tried to palm off a falsehood about George W. Bush, it was he and not Bush who was for all practical purposes finished.

Even this does not necessarily mean that a success in Iraq will be invulnerable to a Tet-like treatment by the anti-Bush Doctrine forces. There will inevitably be more than enough Iraqi counterparts of the "poppies" and "Taliban rebels" of Afghanistan for them to harp upon. Still, under the circumstances of today, they will have a harder time than their forebears of 1968 did with Tet. It may even come to pass that, like Dan Rather as against Walter Cronkite, they and not Bush will end up being discredited.

If so, will they then throw in the towel? Not on your life. To admit that they were wrong about the Bush Doctrine would be tantamount to declaring intellectual and political bankruptcy—to acknowledge that all their ideas about the international order, and about the role the United States should properly play in world affairs, had become as worthless as Confederate currency.

Which brings us full circle to the predictions of a second-term retreat by the administration. If there is in fact to be no retreat on Iraq, realists and others will have to fall back on different ground. It is already on that ground—where stands the threat represented by North Korea and Iran, the other two members of the Axis of Evil—that the realists in particular are preparing to open a new front in their war against World War IV.

Enter Iran and North Korea

WE GET an inkling of how this polemical redeployment is being executed from a piece by David E. Sanger of the *New York Times* early last December under the headline "Hawk Sightings Could be Premature." It would, writes Sanger, be

> risky to race to the certainty . . . that a second Bush administration, unrestrained by the caution of Colin Powell, will lead the United States into an unending series of confrontations with the world, starting with bellicose approaches to controlling the nuclear ambitions of Iran and North Korea. . . . It has been quite a while since the

[17] Many more such gory details can be found in *Big Story*, Peter Braestrup's massive two-volume study of how the media covered Tet.

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> words "Axis of Evil" sprang from the President's lips. And during the election campaign, it was clear from the President's words and actions that the limits on American power had begun to sink in on this White House.

Neatly tying everything together, Sanger and his sources attribute this newfound caution to our experience in Iraq:

> Iraq has made it harder to be hawkish in this White House . . . because it has tied down American combat troops and magnified the need to juggle scarce military resources. . . . The result is that "we may have maxed out on hawkishness for a while," said Daniel Benjamin, who served on the National Security Council under President Clinton. . . . There will be "many opportunities to sound hawkish" on North Korea and Iran, said Mr. Benjamin, but Mr. Bush has limited options in both places.

Seconding Benjamin is Ivo H. Daalder of the Brookings Institution, whom Sanger quotes as asserting that there is no way Bush can stop Iran from acquiring and North Korea from deploying nuclear weapons:

> "Instead, we may just do less in a second term, and learn to live with our limits," Mr. Daalder said, even if that means silently tolerating a nuclear capability that Mr. Bush has said would be unacceptable in either North Korea or Iran.

Even Pat Buchanan, suddenly cross-dressing[18] as a realist, gets into this particular act:

> What appears to be happening is this: While there is no shortage of neocon war plans for a Pax Americana, President Bush is bumping up against reality—a U.S. Army tied down and bleeding in Iraq, the rising costs of war, soaring deficits, a sinking dollar, and an absence of allies willing to fight beside us or even help. He is facing the Vietnam dilemma.

But like Edward Luttwak's theory of "entropy," these forecasts "misunderestimate" Bush's resolve and seriousness of purpose. They also take no account whatsoever of how far the Bush Doctrine has already gone beyond the "limits" they were so sure would prevent the implanting of a democratic process in Afghanistan, and how far the same alleged limits are being pushed in Iraq. If Bush remains true to form, he will not be put off by this kind of talk in connection with Iran and North Korea.

But is it only talk, or is it indeed a "hard reality" that we are facing in connection with those two countries? With respect to North Korea, the barrier that most realists see is less military than political (that is, the use or even the threat of force would stir up all kinds of trouble with the South Koreans, who "want a more conciliatory approach"). With respect to Iran, on the other hand, the consensus—embracing even many (most?) enthusiasts of the Bush Doctrine along with all of its opponents—is that no good military option exists. For unlike the nuclear plant at Osirak in Iraq, which presented a single juicy target for the Israelis to bomb in 1981, Iranian nuclear facilities have been dispersed all over the place; and to make matters even more difficult, either they have been "hardened" by being buried deep in the earth or they are out in the open and "shielded" by the civilian population surrounding them.

But can it, I wonder, really be true that no "viable military options" exist for preventing Iran from getting its evil hands on nuclear weapons, and North Korea from deploying or threatening to deploy the ones it evidently already has? Can it really be true that it is beyond the wit and the capabilities of the most powerful nation in the history of the world to devise and execute a strategy for averting something very close to a mortal danger?

NOT BEING a general or the son of a general, I do not know how to design such a strategy. Nor do I deny that it would be better all around if we could achieve our objective without firing a shot. But as the old saying goes, I have a bridge to sell to anyone who thinks that we can rely on the farcical agreements recently negotiated with the North Korean madmen and the mullocracy in Tehran, or on the impotent blusterings of the UN Security Council.

From the way George W. Bush has been talking lately, one might conclude that he wishes to make a bid for my bridge, and that he has forgotten the statement I quoted earlier that so dismayed the liberal internationalists and that is worth quoting again in this context:

> We cannot defend America and our friends by hoping for the best. We cannot put our faith in the word of tyrants, who solemnly sign non-proliferation treaties, and then systematically break them.

Yet I strongly doubt that Bush has suddenly discovered that there is wisdom in "hoping for the best" and putting "our faith in the word of tyrants." To me, it seems much more likely that in backing the European approach to Iran and the six-power negotiations with North Korea, he is once again walking the last diplomatic mile, exactly as when he spent so many

[18] I have borrowed this image from Buchanan himself, who used it in his notorious speech at the Republican National Convention of 1992.

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months and so much energy working to get the UN to endorse an invasion of Iraq. Simultaneously, in going through this exercise, he is also trying to buy time until the situation in Iraq settles down.

In North Korea, it appears that there is no diplomatic or political way out. But in Iran, there may be an alternative in the internal opposition aspiring to overthrow the mullocracy and replace it with a democratic government. Admittedly, these opponents are also Iranian nationalists, and they could in their turn also claim the right to develop a nuclear capability. But if Iran were no longer a sponsor of terrorism and an enemy of the United States, its possession of a nuclear arsenal would pose no imminent danger. Hence it is in our interest to encourage an internal uprising if the opposition is strong enough and if we can find effective ways to speed it up.

That there is no doubting either the strength of the opposition or our ability to aid it has been the constant refrain of Michael Ledeen of the American Enterprise Institute (AEI), whose innumerable articles on the subject in *National Review Online* always end with the mantra "Faster, please." Here, in a nutshell, is his case:

> In Iran today, upward of 70 percent of the population is openly hostile to the regime, vocally desirous of freedom and democracy, and bravely supportive of the Bush Doctrine to bring democratic revolution to the entire region. If we could bring down the Soviet Union by inspiring and supporting a small percentage of the people, surely the chances of successful revolution in Iran are more likely. By orders of magnitude.

Some of Ledeen's colleagues at AEI, together with many other fellow supporters of the Bush Doctrine, strongly disagree. The regime in Tehran, they argue, is not nearly so weak as he judges it to be, and the opposition is no longer as promising as it once looked. But even if they are right, it is hard to see what harm would follow from taking Ledeen's advice, on the chance that we might be as pleasantly surprised in the case of Iran as we were when the Soviet Empire began to implode from within.[19]

If an uprising is *not* in the cards, we will be left with only one alternative to preemptive military action: standing by (while kidding ourselves with empty motions of diplomacy) and watching the world's leading sponsor of terrorism acquire nuclear weapons that it could then pass on to its terrorist protégés for use against the "Great Satan."

There are, indeed, those who have already begun reconciling themselves to this eventuality, and against that terrible day have been resurrecting the old doctrine of Mutual Assured Destruction (usually referred to during World War III by the wonderfully apt acronym "MAD"). No need, they purr, to lose sleep over the remote possibility that the Iranians might equip their favored terrorists with nuclear weapons; the mullahs would surely be deterred from doing so by the fear that, if such weapons were actually used, they themselves would become vulnerable to a retaliatory nuclear strike by us.

The obvious problem with this soothing argument is that the Iranian regime would hotly deny any connection to a terrorist attack on us. Nor would our intelligence agencies, burned once over Saddam, likely be so quick to fix the responsibility on them. Under that all-too-plausible scenario, it would, yes, be mad to place our faith in MAD.

The Wind at Bush's Back

DURING THE presidential campaign, George W. Bush vowed that he would never hesitate to take preemptive action when he deemed such action necessary in order to protect and defend this country. He also promised that he would not subject his decision to the "global test" John Kerry announced that he himself would seek; and he further suggested that he would not be swayed by public-opinion polls or the pressures coming at him from enemies of the Bush Doctrine whether at home or abroad.

From this, as I see it, four things follow. The first is that Bush will do everything in his power to abide by his vow and to keep its ancillary promise by moving in due course and with all deliberate speed from Iraq to North Korea and Iran (with, it is to be hoped, a pit stop in Syria, which has been dispatching jihadi

[19] A practical strategy was recently proposed by the Committee on the Present Danger, of which I am a member.

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terrorists and weapons across the border into Iraq and which presents many fewer obstacles to military action). The second is that, with Iran as with Iraq before it, the issue of WMD is only the proximate or immediate *casus belli*. The strategic objective, as defined and mandated by the Bush Doctrine's prescription for the greater Middle East, is to drain yet another of the swamps in which Islamist terrorists are bred and nourished.

Is Bush ready to proceed in this way and for these purposes? I believe, thirdly, that he is—but, fourthly, that the obstacles he will have to overcome at home are more formidable than those confronting him across the seas and in the field. After a brief period of sulking, the coalition of forces arrayed against him on November 2 has picked itself up off the ground and is now as dangerous as a wounded tiger. So determined is it to dispose of the Bush Doctrine that it could still defeat even a foe as commensurately determined as George W. Bush.

Nor are the odds necessarily in the President's favor, if only because he has—for the moment, at any rate—many fewer defenders and supporters in the world of ideas than are still active in the coalition against him. But we also have to bring into the equation the more than 61 million Americans who swept him back into office on November 2. I began this discussion by arguing that in voting for him, these many millions—making up a clear majority of the American people—were expressing their confidence in the author of the Bush Doctrine as the right man to lead us in a new time of war. Now I want to conclude by considering something Harry Truman, a leader with whom Bush has much in common, said at a point in World War III analogous in certain respects to the one we have reached in World War IV: "What a nation can do or must do begins with the willingness and the ability of its people to shoulder the burden."

True, the burden of fighting World War IV differs from the one Americans were asked to shoulder in World War III. But so did the burden of World War II differ from that of World War III. In some ways we today have it easier than the Americans who lived through those two wars. This time there is no draft, there are no shortages or rationing, and taxes have not been raised. But on the other hand, we have more cause to be anxious over the safety and security of our continental homeland, which none of our enemies in those earlier wars ever managed to strike.

Furthermore, facing a conflict that may well go on for three or four decades, Americans of this generation are called upon to be more patient than "the greatest generation" needed to be in World War II, which for us lasted only four years; and facing an enemy even more elusive than the Communists, the American people of today are required to summon at least as much perseverance as the American people of those days did—for all their bitching and moaning—over the 47 long years of World War III. Indeed, in this area the generation of World War IV has an even more difficult row to hoe than its predecessors in World War II and World War III.

During World War II there was scarcely any defeatist sentiment in the air, not even in response to actual defeats—and we suffered many, especially in the early years. Nor was there a fixation on the mistakes made by Roosevelt and Churchill—and, great men though they indubitably were, they made many. What is more, some of their mistakes were so large and consequential that by comparison those of which Bush and Rumsfeld stand accused seem insignificant, even if we stipulate for the sake of argument that the critics of today are right on every single point. Just think—to cite only one example—of the incredible blunders that cost some 20,000 American lives in the Battle of the Bulge. Yet the main thing everyone knew and remembered about that terrible episode was that the American commander responded to a German demand for surrender with the word "Nuts."[20]

In World War III, by contrast, great bouts of defeatist sentiment did get aroused by critics of the Left and the Right alike. Defeatism was also reinforced by angry recriminations over whether and/or how this or that battle should have been fought. And the battles in dispute were not only military, as in Korea and (to a much larger extent) Vietnam; they were also political, as in the passionate debates over arms control and détente; and they were in addition ideological, as over the question of whether the enemy was Soviet expansionism in particular, or Communism in general, or our own paranoid delusions.

[20] Tim Cavanaugh, in a posting on the website of *Reason* magazine, offers a partial summary of other such blunders: "American Marines were slaughtered at Tarawa because the pre-invasion bombardment of the island was woefully deficient. Hundreds of American paratroopers were killed by American anti-aircraft fire during landings in Italy—for that matter the entire campaign up the Italian boot was an obvious waste of time, resources, and lives that prevented the western Allies from getting seriously into the war until the middle of 1944. (If anybody deserved impeachment, it was Winston Churchill, whose imperial obsession with the Mediterranean 'underbelly' led to disasters in both world wars.) In late 1944, Allied commanders failed to anticipate that the Germans would attack through Belgium despite their having done so in 1914 and 1940. Abuse and murder of prisoners, targeting of civilians, and indiscriminate bombing all were common. On any given week, World War II offered more [foul-ups] and catastrophes than anything that has been seen in postwar Iraq."

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World War IV is already marked by its own version of all these features ("Why are we in Iraq?"; "Who, exactly, is the enemy?"; "Is there really a terrorist threat?"). But in the 24-hour-a-day TV coverage that now exists, the forces promoting defeatism have a far more potent weapon for magnifying everything that goes wrong, or only appears to have gone wrong. We who support World War IV can complain all we like about these conditions, but they are the ones under which it will have to be fought if it is to be fought at all. The bottom line is that we are up against even more defeatism in this war than there was in World War III.

Before we entered World War II, serious doubts were raised as to whether we were a match for such disciplined and fanatical enemies as Nazi Germany and Imperial Japan. And in World War III, leading anti-Communists like Whittaker Chambers and James Burnham were sure that we lacked the stomach, the heart, the will, and the wit to stand effectively against the Soviet Union and its allies and sympathizers: to Chambers we were "the losing side," and to Burnham we were veritably suicidal in our weakness and folly. They turned out to be wrong because, as Charles Horner of the Hudson Institute once put it in speaking of Chambers, they, and not they alone, failed "to anticipate the resiliency of the American citizenry and its leadership."[21] Today similar doubts and fears are once again all over the place, with even some of my fellow supporters of the Bush Doctrine murmuring that we have all grown too soft, too self-indulgent, and too self-absorbed to meet yet another daunting challenge.

Except for an occasional twinge brought on by paying too much attention to the antiwar forces, and to certain aspects of our culture, both low and high, I did not share these doubts and fears before the verdict of November 2, and they have been quite banished by what I am persuaded the American people were saying when they voted to keep George W. Bush in the White House for another four years.

Which is why I think (to say it one last time) that the amazing leader this President has amazingly turned out to be will—like the comparably amazing Harry Truman before him when he took on the Communist world—have the wind at his back as he continues the struggle against Islamist radicalism and its vicious terrorist armory: a struggle whose objective is the spread of liberty and whose success will bring greater security and greater prosperity not only to the people of this country, and not only to the people of the greater Middle East, but also to the people of Europe and beyond, in spite of the sorry fact that so many of them do not wish to know it yet.

[21] "Why Whittaker Chambers Was Wrong," COMMENTARY, April 1990.

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Has Iraq Weakened Us?

Victor Davis Hanson

WHATEVER THE results of the elections scheduled for late January in Iraq, a new pessimism about that country, as well as about the larger war on terror, has taken hold in many circles in the United States. Serious observers, not to mention shriller commentators like Paul Krugman and Maureen Dowd of the *New York Times*, have concluded not only that the United States is stuck in a hopeless quagmire in Iraq, but that our unwise unilateral intervention there is having painful repercussions both for our position as an honest promoter of reform and for our diplomatic and military maneuverability elsewhere in the world.

Joining the pessimism, Alistair Horne, the eminent British military historian, recently likened the American situation in Iraq to the French debacle in the "brutal Algerian eight-year war"; his obvious inference was that the ultimate denouement will be a similarly abrupt and humiliating Western withdrawal. Horne could adduce much apparent evidence to support this depressing proposition: the instability in the Sunni triangle over the last two years, mounting American combat fatalities, a seemingly endless insurgency, the increasing reluctance of allies to support in any serious material way the world's lone superpower, and a failure of moderate Iraqis to step forward and deny sanctuary to the terrorists in their midst. The more jihadists, Baathists, and *mujahideen* that Americans kill, the more of them have seemed to pour into Iraq from Syria and other places in the neighboring Islamic world, either for pay or out of religious zeal. As for the Iraqi "street," it appears to be both repulsed and paralyzed by this terrorist barbarity, and above all uncertain whether the Americans will stay long enough to ensure either safety or the promised democracy.

Meanwhile, American efforts at democratization are the object of much criticism at home, both on pragmatic and ideological grounds. Even some supporters of the war have come to see these post-bellum efforts as naïve, misconceived, or simply too taxing in the tribal and factional circumstances of Iraq. A November 2004 article in *Reason*, subtitled "Twilight of the Liberal Hawks," surveyed the second thoughts of a number of pundits and columnists, among them Paul Berman, Thomas Friedman, Kenneth Pollack, Fareed Zakaria, Andrew Sullivan, and Michael Ignatieff. Each of them, unhappy in his own particular way with the failure to deal with the post-April 2003 insurrection in Iraq, has criticized the Bush administration not only for its conduct of the Iraq operation but, at least by implication, for the much more ambitious project of an American-led democratizing of the greater Middle East.

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The newly perceived area of strategic crisis emanates worldwide from its current center in Baghdad. With over 130,000 troops and $100 billion tied up on the ground in Iraq, where, critics ask, are we to find ready reserves for other hot spots on the horizon? Aside from the boiling Middle East, the Balkans are not yet pacified; our relationship with the South Koreans is in a state of dangerous flux; and Japan, lacking its own strategic arsenal, is sandwiched between a rising China and a nuclear North Korea. Add in the worry over protecting Taiwan, instability in the former Soviet republics, leftist rumblings in South America, and the United States may stand in need of additional and sizable rapid-reaction forces that it shows no signs of being able to recruit, train, or pay for in time to deal with most emergencies.

Nor is it only a matter of a current shortage of manpower. Looming domestic problems—a declining dollar, huge budget deficits, and dependence on overseas capital—are exacerbated by the fact that we have committed over a third of our available combat strength to Iraq and do not have the ready funds to recreate the divisions lost to budget cuts in the 1990's. It is at least partly with this perceived gap between responsibilities and resources in mind that even some conservatives have begun to weigh in with regret. In June 2004, William F. Buckley, Jr. concluded: "If I knew then what I know now about what kind of situation we would be in, I would have opposed the war." Although Buckley has since offered different thoughts, George F. Will still appears as pessimistic as he was when he announced in the headline of a May 2004 column: "Time for Bush to See the Realities of Iraq."

Finally, a number of retired generals and admirals—Wesley Clark, William J. Crowe, Barry McCaffrey, Tony McPeak, William Odom, Stansfield Turner, and Anthony Zinni—have worried publicly over the demands placed on the United States in Iraq and the specter of another open-ended, Vietnam-like commitment sapping American assets, troop morale, and public support for the military. Moved by the hard facts of finite resources and the soft reality of censure at home and abroad, these former-officers-turned-political-commentators emphasize our increasing vulnerabilities and voice a reluctance to exercise any further American power abroad except under the aegis of the United Nations and with de-facto NATO blessing.

POLITICAL PROGNOSES in wartime are notoriously mercurial, hinging on the weekly eddies of the battlefield. But these are sometimes poor indicators of larger strategic currents. If one thing can be said with confidence about Iraq, it is that the story is not over, since so far the daily bombings have neither prompted American withdrawal nor derailed scheduled elections and reforms. In World War II, the bloodiest moment of the Pacific theater was at Okinawa, finally declared secure a mere nine weeks before the Japanese surrender, while in Europe the Battle of the Bulge, a slog that cost more American lives than the drive to the Rhine, was not finished until only about 100 days before Germany collapsed. What can be seen in hindsight, and only in hindsight, is that while Americans were being butchered in Belgium and on Sugar Loaf Hill, larger forces were insidiously working to doom Germany and Japan in short order. The last gasps of resistance are sometimes the bloodiest and most unexpected.

Just so, Afghanistan a year ago was supposedly a hopeless case, torn apart by warlords and Taliban resurgence, and unfit for elections; today the country is mostly on the back pages, as if democracy were *de rigueur* for a nation recently dismissed as a relic of the Dark Ages. Similarly, with all the news of bombings and beheadings coming from Iraq, the larger picture, not so easily deciphered, shows signs of real progress in most of the country. The long overdue retaking of Falluja and ancillary military operations have sent their own signal: that a reelected George Bush intends to ensure the installation and the survival of a legitimately elected Iraqi government. The specter of that constitutional authority sending troops to quash mercenaries, Baathists, and Wahhabi jihadists is precisely what frightens al Qaeda and other avatars of Islamic fascism, who have rightly grasped that their failure in the Sunni triangle will constitute a bitter defeat for global Islamic fundamentalism itself.

The American persistence in Iraq under difficult circumstances might also explain why potential enemies farther afield, from Teheran to Pyongyang, have so far decided not to seize the moment to press their luck with the United States. Meanwhile, the world at large appears more, rather than less, disposed to stand up to Islamic fascism and the terror it wages. Even less ambiguously, Pakistan, though often playing a duplicitous role in the past, has remained a neutral in the war on terror if not at times an ally, while its nuclear guru, A.P. Khan, is for the moment in retirement. On the issue of the dangers posed by Islamic extremism, nearly 3 billion people in India, China, Japan, and the former Soviet Union are more likely to favor than to oppose American counterterrorism efforts. Libya is suddenly coming clean about its own nefarious schemes and even opening its borders to African

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aid workers. Murmurs of democratic change are rumbling throughout the autocratic Gulf. Terrorists are not so welcome as they once were in Jordan, Yemen, or much of North Africa. Even Europe, stung by charges of profit-driven appeasement, and even the UN, reeling under financial and humanitarian scandals, are reconsidering their habitual modes of reflexive accommodation.

Do these developments guarantee a more secure world in the offing? Hardly. But they are positive indications of momentum—signs that themselves reflect the unexpected forcefulness of the American response to Islamic terrorism and its dictatorial supporters. Stop, or pull out of Iraq before a free society is secure, and the entire sequence of reform could operate in reverse, leading four or five Middle Eastern states instead to become either nuclear-armed or open havens for anti-Western terrorists—or both. The task of stabilizing Iraq is thus of enormous significance in a region that, thanks only to the United States and its coalition allies, may yet be forced to confront its dictators' worst nightmare: not terrorist violence but televised coverage of citizens queuing up to vote in free elections and then arguing in an unfettered parliament.

There are lessons here for those who claim that American flexibility has become increasingly constricted and American choices all but foreclosed. In fact, as Iraq comes slowly under control, the opposite prognosis is at least as likely to be the case. Precisely *because* of proven American resolve in Iraq, the United States now commands both military and diplomatic options—well short of another Iraq-style invasion—that were not at its disposal previously.

The new stature enjoyed by America is especially germane in the Middle East itself. There, the first place where diplomatic and political initiatives could usefully be exercised is in the problematic triad of Syria, Lebanon, and Iran. The U.S. might, to begin with, pressure the UN Security Council to go beyond its recent call for Syria to end its occupation of Lebanon by demanding internationally supervised elections, to follow immediately upon the departure of the Baathists.

Both Iran and Syria, through their terrorist ganglia on the ground in the Bekka valley, can be counted on to try to strangle any such effort. But this is not 1983, when America retreated after Marines were murdered in Beirut and later bargained for hostages. Today the Lebanese, returning to their wonted entrepreneurialism, are tiring of the Baathist Syrians. Yasir Arafat is dead. And the Iranians are leery of American strikes against their nuclear facilities. It is thus a singularly opportune moment to stir worries about principled democratization; for nothing could be more dangerous to an untested dictatorship like Syria's than to ring it with an enlarging circle of autonomous countries with free elections, unbridled radio and television, and uncensored Internet service. To Arabs in Syria and elsewhere who are increasingly aware that they enjoy neither the freedoms nor the prosperity that billions elsewhere take for granted, the appeal of such reform is potentially explosive.

Other equally bold diplomatic initiatives could be undertaken, their credibility similarly enhanced by the operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. For example, the present Middle-East-aid policy of the United States is a relic both of the cold war (pump oil and keep out Communists) and the 1979 Camp David agreements (subsidize Egypt). Such short-term measures, carrying the odor of entreaty if not of bribery, hardly reflect our current aim of promoting consensual government. With both Saddam and the Soviets gone, granting weapons and money to the regime in Cairo—nearly $50 billion since 1979—is becoming counterproductive. What advantages the United States receives in "moderation" is overshadowed by the venomous anti-Americanism that is the daily fare of millions of Egyptians, whipped up and manipulated by state-sponsored clerics and media.

As several congressional critics, most prominently Tom Lantos, have pointed out, America loses both ways: the money and the business-as-usual attitude send a message to others in the region that the United States will willingly subsidize anti-American hatred and promote an anti-democratic government in one place while trying to create the opposite elsewhere. True, a Hosni Mubarak is not an Assad or a Rafsanjani, and that must count for something in the volatile Middle East; but under the reign of Mubarak, Egypt has been turned into a kind of Afghanistan-of-the-mind, the intellectual and media mecca for anti-American and anti-Semitic hatred spread throughout the Arab world. We are in a war with both Islamic fascism and Arab autocracy for the hearts and minds of the Arab people, and sincere advocacy of the interests of the latter is the only way to head off a devil's partnership of the former.

As part of President Bush's democratic initiatives in the Middle East, financial or military support from the United States could, instead, be tied far more closely to constitutional reforms in places like Egypt, the Gulf States, North Africa, and Jordan. Such a policy, appealing directly to the citizenry of the Arab world, would also be invaluable when it

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comes to dealing with looming requests from the Palestinian Authority for still more cash aid. But the point is also general. Rather than cherry-picking the autocracies of the Middle East, with aid lavished on those who *sound* most moderate, it makes far more sense to calibrate help with evidence of concrete steps toward democratization.

Elections have their place in such a policy, but, alone, they are not the be-all and end-all. Ten years ago, "one man, one vote, one time" was a valid description of so-called democratic reform in the Arab world. The risk then was that, through our fixation with plebiscites, we would become complicit in bringing to power not a democracy but a "demonocracy" in the form of anti-democratic clerics or Arafat-like killers. In the case of Arafat himself, crowned president of the Palestinian Authority in a "democratic" election with Jimmy Carter's seal of approval, that deformity is precisely what happened.

Nor has the risk of democratic distortion abated. But we can hedge our coveted financial and diplomatic support with demands not merely for elections but for constitutional guarantees of human rights, market reforms, and free expression. In addition, though this is a trickier proposition, we can insist on evidence of liberalization as a precondition for continuing to pour billions of petrodollars into the region.

Pundits speak of poverty as the catalyst for terrorism in the Islamic world; in fact, far more often it is not the dearth but the spectacular abundance of wealth in Middle Eastern societies that has incited and then fueled the killers. In theocratic Iran, oil money is recycled both to Hizballah and the nuclear-weapons program. In Saudi Arabia, Western dollars translate into Wahhabi mosques and madrassas all over the world. Saddam Hussein not only corrupted much of the industrialized Western world via the UN's Oil-for-Food program but had earlier attacked four countries with his petrodollar-acquired arsenal. *Al-Jazeera*, the propaganda successor to *Pravda*, and critical to the insurrectionists' efforts in the Sunni triangle, is an indirect dividend from Qatar's oil revenues.

If Americans have learned anything from the careers of Qaddafi, the Saudi royal family, Saddam Hussein, and the Iranian clergy, it is that huge petroleum profits accruing among illegitimate autocrats are a recipe for global terrorism and regional havoc. One way to end the present pathology is for the United States, accepting that concerns for our national survival can sometimes trump the logic of finding the cheapest energy source, to develop a policy that helps drive down world petroleum prices. Another option is far more aggressively to promote democratic reforms among the petrol sheikdoms themselves. A third is to do both. Given the entry of India and China into the world petroleum market, fostering tighter global demand while potentially circumscribing our own clout, the hour is more urgent than ever; but the Middle East is also, and once again thanks to the ongoing reform of Iraq and Afghanistan, more fluid and perhaps more promising than ever.

POLITICAL INITIATIVES come in more than one form. A more muscular way of dealing with autocratic regimes involves direct support for dissidents and pro-democratic reformers, including elected ones. Fair elections that lead to constitutional government should be a non-negotiable proposition; if Sunni or other extremists object, as in Iraq, then it might be made clear that they will be left to carry on a struggle not only against the majority of the local population but also against an internationally recognized government backed in the last resort by the American military. We wish to avoid civil war; but, like it or not, in championing the formerly despised of Iraq, the United States is engaged in landmark social, political, and cultural upheavals, and it is naïve to think that the Kurdish-Shiite coalition will be denied majority rule.

Iran is a *locus classicus* of what might be accomplished by encouraging indigenous grassroots reformers. The dilemma facing the United States is well known: stopping Iran's nuclear program is vital, yet both action and inaction have their unsavory costs. Unlike in Syria or in Saddam's Iraq, there is, by every credible report, broad and active internal opposition to the Iranian mullocracy. But not only would military action against Iran's dispersed nuclear installations be operationally difficult, but the ensuing worldwide hysteria would possibly embolden the regime to move against the dissidents (they were nearly wiped out during the 1980's under cover of Iran's war with Iraq).

Yet inaction, leading to an Iran armed with nuclear weapons, could yield the same deleterious effect: a triumphant regime now feeling secure enough to deal summarily with its internal opponents. In this wait-and-see moment, it is therefore all the more incumbent on the United States to step up its covert support for democratic dissidents. Even more importantly, today's underground reformers could be helped to evolve into openly organized groups, analogous to the refuseniks in the former Soviet Union, Solidarity in Poland, or the *contras* in Nicaragua—human-rights cadres capable

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of mounting a public campaign against the Iranian regime that might resonate in European capitals as well as among our own elites. Such advocacy does not mean we should be in the business of selecting the leaders of these groups, let alone dictating their agendas or masterminding their tactics; those who suffer first-hand repression know better than we what needs to be done and how to go about doing it. But if America is to win the current death struggle in the Middle East, we must aggressively promote democratization in Iran—and Syria—before both of them undermine it across the border in Iraq.

In line with this ambitious agenda, there are also military options available. Bill Clinton's cruise missiles and four-day bombing campaigns—complete with mandatory cessations before Ramadan or reprieves when Arab royalty was reportedly lunching with would-be targets—were poor substitutes for real action. But under the present, radically changed conditions, stand-off bombing remains a valuable consideration. Unlike in the 1990's, the United States has *already* shown that it can and will topple Islamic fascists on the ground—that no tactic is any longer taboo for Americans. The old, post-Mogadishu charge that the United States will not risk a fight on the ground has been disproved. Thus, bombing can be an end in itself or a precursor to something more, and we can leave it to others to do the guessing as to which course we will follow.

Targets of retaliation from the air include potential nuclear-weapons plants, identified nationals conducting terrorist bombing operations abroad, or visible signs of material aid flowing to jihadists across a border. Military action of this kind would serve not only to erode a country's military assets and damage its infrastructure but to bring humiliation upon its ruling power. In some case, the threat of retaliation might itself suffice. If Syria, for example, continues to allow ex-Baathists to plot and fund insurrection in Iraq or to serve as a transit station for jihadists out to kill Americans, then Secretary of State Rice might present Bashar Assad with a list of military targets that could, without warning, be systematically destroyed from the air.

The problem with our 1990's air campaigns in Afghanistan, Iraq, and North Africa was transparent: our enemies knew that this was the last, not the first, stage of American retaliation and comprised the full extent of our military options. That perception is why we derived only a partial punitive benefit from Operation Desert Fox in Iraq or from striking back in Afghanistan and Sudan, and sparked little interest among the targeted in changing their ways. In the pre-9/11 world, such tactics were also largely predicated on the promise of few if any casualties, for us or even for our adversaries. Today's goal, by contrast, is to protect the democratic process in Afghanistan and Iraq against any in the region who threaten it, and to do so without necessarily investing American ground troops in additional theaters. For this, air power once again is a condign instrument.

Flexibility in response is essential in a war against diverse enemies. After the success of air campaigns in Kosovo and Serbia, some observers proclaimed a new age of Air-Force exclusivity. In Afghanistan, Americans riding on donkeys and calling in GPS coordinates from their laptops suggested still another radically new military paradigm. After the 2003 race to Baghdad and the retaking of Falluja in late 2004, we were happy we still had retrograde standbys like Abrams tanks and up-armored Humvees. The simple conclusion is that all assets and options are necessary, but not necessarily all the time.

America can always use more combat troops, planes, and ships, even if it is not advisable in every circumstance to pour assets into a theater in hopes that numbers can make up for what fighting alone can accomplish; the desirable size of the American military is not entirely the same issue as the proper number of soldiers to be deployed in any given situation. On the other hand, fighting need not take the identical form or incur the same costs everywhere. Another age-old lesson relearned from our experience in Iraq and Afghanistan is that victory in one battle increases the range of options in the next and lessens the military adventurism of our enemies—just as an American setback does the reverse.

The removal of the Taliban and the election of Hamid Karzai were of historic importance. So too was the end of the Saddam Hussein mafia, and so, following the present long ordeal, will be the Iraqi elections. Without a doubt, Saddam's Iraq was the most challenging of all the Middle East rogue regimes. The next step, reforming or changing the governments in Lebanon, Syria, and Iran demands its own flexible strategy and its own proper diplomatic and military calculus. But, contrary to the imagining of critics, the post-Iraq reformation of the Middle East will not necessarily have to be accomplished by the invasion of tens of thousands of American troops. Other remedies may well suit our national and humanitarian interests—strategies opened up, ironically, by our previous determination to *use* our ground forces in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as by our will to see the process through to its end, without hesitation, apology, or compromise.

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Europe's Crisis

Arthur Waldron

THE GREAT transatlantic European-American divorce, about which we have heard so much: is it really going to take place?

A few months ago, from the other side of the Atlantic, it looked like a done deal. Seldom had the sheer weight of European opinion seemed so monolithically averse not only to American policies but to the American character, especially as represented by President George W. Bush. Before the November election, polls of the British parliament suggested that 87 percent of that body's members would have voted for John Kerry; among Tories, only 2 percent stated that they would be "delighted" by Bush's reelection. After the event took place, *Le Soir* of Brussels spoke for many in characterizing the reaction of European elites as "no longer about policy, but a matter of rage"—rage, the paper elsewhere went on to explain, over America's "anaesthetization by a detestable mixture of economic-financial interest groups, blind militarism, religious fundamentalism, and neoconservative propaganda."

To be sure, this latest outburst of European America-loathing has roots, even deep roots. Readers of a certain age will remember the demonstrations in Britain of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, founded in 1957; the massive Europe-wide protests against the Vietnam war in the 1970's; or the hysteria over European deployment of Pershing-2 missiles in the early 1980's. Since the end of the cold war, the debate has shifted somewhat. Today one is more likely to hear, in tones of resignation, bafflement, or fury, that Europe and America are simply too different, in too many ways, for their one-time alliance of convenience to continue.

"Many U.S. priorities concern traditional power politics," goes one line of argument (I am quoting *Le Soir* again), "while the European Union often seems to be groping after a more rule-governed world." Another line focuses less on political than on economic priorities: Europeans distrust markets and favor state intervention to maintain living standards and equalize incomes, while Americans want less welfare and more tooth-and-claw competition. ("Only Europe," pleaded the London *Guardian*, can provide a "viable counterpoint to the economic brutalism of the American way.") Most importantly, perhaps, Europeans see themselves as enlightened secularists while Americans are incorrigibly and benightedly religious—and some, like Bush, frighteningly so: "God's President," as the London *Observer* put it.

And yet, no sooner had Bush been reelected than Europe seemed suddenly beset by second thoughts, even if they were not always presented as such.

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THE SINGLE most momentous catalyst for this rethinking was an event that occurred on election day itself, November 2. This was the brutal murder in Amsterdam, in broad daylight, of Theo van Gogh, a quixotic provocateur who had just completed a short film, *Submission*, about the abuse of women under Islam. The film had so enraged Mohammed Bouyeri, a twenty-six-year-old Dutch Muslim of Moroccan descent, that he ambushed the filmmaker as he pedaled to work, cut his throat to the spinal bone with a meat cleaver, and then thrust into his chest a dagger to which was affixed a letter threatening the lives of others for insulting or blaspheming Islam. Most of those named in the note are still in hiding.

To add irony to gruesomeness, two years earlier this same Mohammed Bouyeri, his impeccably tolerant and liberal views expressed in perfect Dutch, had been featured in the media as a shining model of the success of Holland's official multiculturalism. Now his connections to Islamists in Morocco were quickly traced, and continuing investigations disclosed an ever-larger network—including contacts in Belgium and neighboring states—indicating that he had not acted alone. All of Western Europe, it rapidly came to be said, faced a similar peril: as Britain's then Home Secretary David Blunkett warned on BBC television, al Qaeda "is on our doorstep, and threatening our lives."

That such sentiments marked a change in European attitudes toward the threat of Islamic terrorism should be plain enough. Previously, many had either derided American concerns on this score or seemed to assume that they could avoid the threat simply by keeping their distance from Washington. Thus, the Islamist bombings of Spanish railways in March 2004 led not to a resolve on the part of Spaniards to redouble their efforts in the war against terror but, on the contrary, to the immediate ousting of their prime minister, who had brought the country into the American-led coalition in Iraq. In the *Guardian*, Polly Toynbee, in the course of dismissing Tony Blair as an American stooge, scoffed at the "breathtaking Pentagon nonsense about the nature of global terrorism, its causes and cures."

After the murder of van Gogh, little more was heard along these lines. Suddenly—one could feel it happening—a whole state of mind seemed to disappear. If, as David Pryce-Jones rightly pointed out in the December 2004 COMMENTARY, a kind of "fellow traveling" mentality had taken hold in Europe where the Islamist threat was concerned, it was now being generally acknowledged that one could not escape that threat, as the Spanish had attempted to do, by cutting ties with Washington; one could only escape it by defeating the terrorists.

Of course, acknowledging reality is one thing; doing something about it is another. In the ensuing weeks, European governments moved rather quickly to increase numbers of police, to improve intelligence, to strengthen cooperation across borders, and to begin to confront the difficulties presented by the millions of Muslim immigrants whom their economies require for their survival. Suddenly respectable, even mainstream, became talk of identity cards, immigration controls, laws requiring imams to preach in the local language, and the need to come to grips with the sheer vacuity of what one Dutch politician decried as her country's longstanding creed of "passive tolerance," according to which newcomers of every kind were welcome and, facing no civic requirements or challenges of any kind, were simply invited to join in the general, non-conflictive fun.

Has a line been crossed, then, or will momentary fright, having been met by spasmodic gestures of resolution, devolve into lethargy and accommodation? It is too soon to tell; but in the fleeting recognition that terrorism in Europe is not Washington's problem, and that Europeans cannot look to Washington to solve it for them, reality did intrude, and, if anything in life is certain, not for the last time.

NOR IS terrorism the only problem affecting Europe's general security that, like it or not, Europe alone is going to have to deal with. The present European Union, comprising 25 states (with 15 more hoping to join), faces unique strategic challenges. Already sharing a border with the newly expanded EU are Ukraine, Belarus, Moldova, and Russia. If and when Turkey joins, Europe will include both it and Cyprus, another "Asian" state, and will then, by its own volition, be sharing borders with Georgia, Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria.

In short, the new European Union is forming itself smack in the cockpit of geopolitical danger. At the same time, it lacks either the material or the diplomatic wherewithal to deal with this danger in a forceful or unified manner. As the crisis of freedom in Ukraine developed this past November and December, and as Polish President Aleksandr Kwasniewski and Solidarity hero Lech Walesa headed for Kiev, the stance of the French government was, as a French commentator aptly put it, one of "embarrassment." "It can scarcely be an ac-

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cident," the English columnist Philip Stephens dryly observed in the *Financial Times*, "that France's Jacques Chirac and Germany's Gerhard Schroeder have not missed the opportunity to keep quiet about Ukraine's orange revolution"—an event of far greater consequence for them, and for the European Union at large, than anything the United States may or may not be doing in Iraq.

The plain fact is that, for 50 years, Europe enjoyed a privileged existence, relieved by the American deterrent of the need to defend itself against the Soviet Union. Those days are gone, but Europeans are only now beginning to understand what that means. "Europe is incapable of guaranteeing, on its territory, the security and freedom of movement of citizens and residents who wish to exercise their freedom of thought and free expression," lamented the French leftist paper *Libération* after the van Gogh murder. To which might be added that it is also incapable of guaranteeing its territory against foreign threats.

Unfortunately, many Europeans are still trapped in the old modes. A good example was a headline above a recent *Financial Times* editorial: "Iran's Deterrent: Only the U.S. Can Address Teheran's Nuclear Concerns." Can that really be the case? Is not Iran a good deal closer to Europe than to the United States—and are not the Europeans currently carrying out an initiative of their own vis-à-vis Iran that, rightly or wrongly, excludes the United States?

But there are other, more heartening signs as well. Just as terrorism has haltingly come to be addressed as a European problem, and not simply a byproduct of American incompetence or worse, so too are some Europeans beginning to contemplate defending themselves. The number of men under arms already exceeds that of the United States. The European Union has also started its own security program—so far, a minuscule one. Some 7,000 EU peacekeepers will go to Bosnia; a rapid-reaction force of 1,500, capable of moving on ten days' notice, is in the works.

If the numbers are hardly impressive, that is partly because Europeans are not agreed among themselves about whether they really need a separate security organization. Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, for example, the secretary general of NATO, sees "no need to reinvent the wheel." Nor is Europe necessarily willing to pay the freight. Currently, France spends $45 billion per year on defense, more than any other European country (the United Kingdom is next). The entire 25-member EU spends $208 billion. The United States alone spends $405 billion.

But here is a place where, inadvertently (or perhaps I should say dialectically), Washington may be playing a helpful role. To reduce matters to their most basic, the security of Europe is no longer an indispensable security requirement of the United States. Of course Americans have values and sympathies, which may eventually add up to interests, but in the most hard-headed strategic terms, now that the USSR is gone, and with a home-based American ability to destroy any target in the world, the details of what happens eight or nine hours east by air from Washington will usually turn out to be of far deeper concern to Europe than to the United States. If we were to wake up one morning and learn that the EU buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg had been destroyed, we would surely be shocked, but we would not in any way be under direct threat ourselves.

To this reality, too, more and more Europeans may at last be awakening.

As IN security, so in matters economic. At Lisbon in 2001 the European Union set the goal of becoming, by 2010, "the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world." Recently, this project was labeled "a big failure" by none other than Romano Prodi, the outgoing European Commission president.

With five years to go before the target date of 2010, the facts are thoroughly dispiriting. According to Gordon Brown, British chancellor of the exchequer, speaking early in 2004, "Eurozone" growth for the year would be half that of the U.S. and Japan. In the last three years, cumulative Eurozone growth was just 3 percent, compared with 5.5 percent for the U.S. and 6 for the UK. In fact the results proved far worse than Brown had predicted. Figures for the third quarter of 2004 show German and French growth at 0.1 percent.

Structural unemployment, itself intimately related to European welfare policies, is imbedded in the system. In France, unemployment runs to 10 percent; in Belgium, it is at almost 9 percent in the relatively prosperous Flemish-speaking areas, 19 percent in French-speaking Wallonia, and an astonishing 22 percent in the capital city of Brussels. Germany, where an individual unemployed for more than a year can receive up to half his previous net wages for an unlimited period of time, has created a system unique in the world for discouraging the energetic search for work.

Moreover, and despite the widespread unemployment, simply to fill existing jobs requires a net inflow of 1.5 million migrants a year. To bring Eu-

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ropean work-force participation to U.S. levels would require 17 million more jobs. Who is to perform those jobs, if not immigrants?

Fertility rates make the future look even more ominous. In the United States, the average woman produces 2.06 children, just about replacement level; in the 25-nation EU, the average number of children is only 1.46, which means populations will shrink, more immigrants will be needed, and, as longevity increases, the young will be increasingly burdened by the old.*

During a visit to China in October 2004, Jacques Chirac suggested that somehow his country and his continent could escape the need for internal reform by developing a privileged relationship with the "emerging superpower" of China. Whether or not the rise of China is inevitable—I have regularly expressed my own doubts about this†—there is no denying that China is indeed growing. But how? Not by buying French grain, or by ordering a version of France's impressive high-speed train (the producer of which has gone bankrupt), or by buying French weapons. China, like India and the other economic powers of Asia, is growing by *selling* things.

Exports constitute 20 percent of China's gross national product, and even its Asian neighbors are having trouble matching the bargain-basement prices made possible by Beijing's "disciplined" labor force. Great swaths of the American economy have already been laid low by Asian exports, Chinese in particular, and we are far better equipped to meet the challenge than are the Europeans. So the special relationship with China, which Paris has long pursued, is not going to save European manufacturing. If present trends continue, a far more likely prospect is that it will destroy it completely. When the smoke clears, we may well see an Asia much wealthier than before, a United States bruised but still standing—and a Europe that resembles something like the ruins of the Spanish empire.

Whatever the sins of the United States, destroying the European economy is not among them. But denunciations of American capitalism remain legion in Europe, and the European has not yet emerged who will seriously engage the massive challenge posed to the continent by the growth of the Asian economies. In the meantime, the effects are already crashing over Europe like a storm tide.

IS THE economic situation then hopeless? My answer, perhaps surprisingly, is no. The continent still disposes of formidable material and human resources, and it is not a foregone conclusion that attempts to reform its internal problems and misdirections would fail.

Europe already leads the United States in several dimensions critical to growth. It has a larger aggregate economy and far larger exports ($1,430 billion as against $986 billion), and, critically, its citizens enjoy much higher levels of educational skills. Thus, in a recent international study of mathematical achievement, Hong Kong ranked first, Finland second, the Netherlands fourth, Japan sixth, Canada seventh, Belgium eighth, France sixteenth, Germany nineteenth, Poland twenty-fourth—and the United States twenty-eighth. Mathematics is, of course, the key to future scientific and technical excellence, and in this area the Europeans are far ahead of us.

Besides, if Europe is to be secure, it will *have* to reform its economy to support its military. So far, opportunism and complacency about the steadily declining economy have been the rule, but some influential figures are considering how to go about changing this, in the first place by acknowledging the magnitude of the impending crisis. An authoritative but little studied report by Michel Camdessus, former director of the International Monetary Fund, has put matters starkly: "We are engaged in a process of descent that cannot but lead us, if nothing is done, to a situation that, in a dozen years, will be irreversible." But it need not happen that way. Europe's current condition has identifiable causes, and if those can be addressed, the situation can be improved.

In France, Nicolas Sarkozy, formerly the finance minister, and employment minister Jean-Louis Borloo have published a report estimating that by removing barriers to entry into business, France could create a million jobs. Wim Kok, the former Dutch prime minister, identifies the basic EU problem as "lack of commitment and political will," exemplified in the perennial flouting by core EU states like France and Germany of the Stability and Cooperation Pact intended to reduce deficits and keep European fiscal policies in alignment. Even Asian competition is on the agenda: in March, a European summit will discuss how to lift the competitiveness of the European economy without undercutting the "European model based

* In Europe as in the United States, the economy and standard of living are kept afloat by borrowing. Jacques de la Rosière, the former managing director of the International Monetary Fund, recently declared France's public finances "not sustainable."

† See, for example, "The Chinese Sickness" in COMMENTARY, July-August 2003.

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on solidarity, and on compromise between employers and workers."

IT IS easy to be amused by such small and wholly inadequate beginnings. It is easy to be amused by the actually existing European Union altogether, with its grandiose yet undistinguished buildings in Brussels and Strasbourg, its shameless featherbedding and extravagant entertainment and conference budgets, side by side with its political haplessness, military weakness, book-length constitution, and reflexive habit of impotently wagging a finger across the Atlantic while ignoring Russia, China, the Middle East, and its own competing nationalisms and dysfunctional economies.

But to be dismissive in this way may be to underestimate the depth, and the longevity, of Europe's determination to make something of itself as an entity. The project of unification did not emerge from some glass and steel office tower. It was forged in the fire of World War I, which was when most Europeans understood that they *had* to cooperate; and it was renewed in the aftermath of an even more catastrophic world war. Since then, however creepingly, the course has been set, and though the voyage has already been overlong, circuitous, and ridiculously costly, and will become more so, something like the destination may yet be reached.

The issue is what Europe will look like at that point. Will it be vital, actively taking a role in the pressing issues of war, peace, and development, or will it be inwardly preoccupied and inert, effectively irrelevant to the broader world? For if the EU were actually able to pull off its planned integration with even partial success, and simultaneously resolve its besetting political and economic problems, its potential power could rather quickly be converted into real power. But then the same question would arise that has been hiding in plain sight all along: is it really in Europe's best interest to be seeking this power in order to balance and constrain—or overtake—the United States, as the French insist and as an inchoate consensus seems to believe today, or might not a rediscovery of what the estranged couple have in common be, in fact, a precondition for Europe's emergence from its current crisis?

Here, too, there are some intriguing straws in the wind. To begin with, even amid the general consternation at the results of the American election, there were those in Europe who viewed things otherwise—who indeed saw positive lessons for Europe. In mid-November, the well-known French columnist Ivan Rioufol suggested that the reelection of George W. Bush should be regarded not as a fit of collective madness but rather as an understandable and appropriate demand by a majority of Americans that their liberal elites get back into line. Then he went further:

> The "conservative revolution" victoriously led by George Bush despite the predictions of the media could well be reproduced in France. In fact, the aspirations of Americans—values, religion, security—are not specific to their Anglo-Protestant culture. . . . France's political discourse, just like that of the American Left, only imperfectly reflects the preoccupations of its citizens.

Who knows, in short, where the European Union could go if France were led by an international visionary like Ronald Reagan rather than by a petty nationalist like Jacques Chirac?

We hear a great deal about European values, and how they differ from their inferior American counterparts. But in practice what we see in Europe day to day is a series of low-minded attempts by member states to use the EU for their own narrow purposes, or groups of states insisting on the indefinite postponement of pressing continental issues. These can never constitute a moral compass, let alone a direction forward.

West European capitals today tend not to grasp the degree to which the world is moving toward the ideals of economic and political freedom. Central and East Europeans are miles ahead on this point, as has become clear with the rapid expansion of the EU and the emergence of ideological differences between what Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld termed "old" and "new" Europe. Reactions to the Ukrainian crisis, as I have already suggested, underscored the difference; new Europeans instantly grasped its significance, old Europeans fell back into silence. As a letter writer to the *Guardian* observed, "Clearly it still only takes a growl from Russia for Western Europe to abandon all support for human rights on its eastern borders." One might add that it likewise takes only a growl from Beijing to silence any protest at Chinese actions which, if carried out far more gently by white people, would most certainly be labeled war crimes.

The noble values of economic and political freedom, pioneered by Western Europe, are in low repute in Western Europe, though they are plainly what should serve as the EU's missing ideological cement. Recently I had a long chat with a Japanese ambassador about details of the alliance between

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our two countries. As we parted and he turned to shake hands, he said, "One more thing, Arthur. This is not about any of the things we discussed. It is about freedom." I can easily imagine similar words coming out of the mouth of a Polish or a Latvian or a Czech diplomat. But a French, German, or Italian one?

After the November 2004 election, a German columnist wrote that "if there is one man capable of making a European feel truly European, it is not President Jacques Chirac of France or Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. It is George W. Bush." He was not paying a compliment to the American President. Still and all, there may be more to his words than he intended. Some Europeans have chosen to forget what they were the first to teach the world, but Americans still remember and strive to live by it. Nor, on the grassroots level, are the two communities so different: to a recent survey asking whether the U.S. and Europe share enough common values to be able to cooperate on international problems, 70 percent of Americans answered yes, and so did 60 percent of Europeans. Sixty percent of both believed NATO was important to their security.

What with its borders in flux and its membership growing, terrorism on the increase, and Washington ever more distant, the pressure on Europe to rise to its potential is far stronger today than at any point since the end of World War II. Historians have no right to be optimistic, but events and attitudes like those I have surveyed do sound to me like at least a basis for mutual rediscovery and cooperation, albeit with modalities redefined. It would be a fine historical irony if George W. Bush were to prove a catalyzing agent of this world transformation as well.

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Doing Justice to the Bible

Hillel Halkin

THE HEBREW Bible is not the first known work in history to have been translated; that honor goes to one of several Sumerian narrative poems, like the Gilgamesh epic or "Ishtar's Descent to the Underworld," that were put into Akkadian at the start of the first millennium B.C.E. The earliest Bible translation, produced by Jews in Alexandria, was the third-century B.C.E. Greek version known as the Septuagint. However, the Bible is the first book to have been translated into more than one language (the next was Aramaic in the second century C.E., followed in the fourth by the Latin of the Christian church father Jerome), and it is certainly the book that has been translated into the most languages. English alone has dozens of Bible translations, it being often difficult to determine what constitutes a new translation and what a mere revision of an old one.

And yet there is something contradictory about the large number of English Bibles.

This begins with the fact that the same linguistic features of the Hebrew Bible that have facilitated its repeated translation have also made most translations of it redundant. In conventional terms, the Bible is not, apart from its prophetic and a few other books, a difficult work to translate. Its vocabulary is small, its syntax is simple, its verbal embellishments are few, and its occasional obscurities are rarely a hindrance to understanding the passages they occur in. Compared with other classics of the Western tradition, the possibilities for significant variation in Bible translation are small. Why keep re-translating a book when most translations of it end up reading like most others?

The obvious answer is that the Bible is not just a book. It is, for many readers, the word of God, every new translation of which, no matter how minor its differences, may bring one closer to what God has said. One can tire of looking for fresh nuances or greater readability in translations of *The Iliad* or *The Divine Comedy*, but not in divine revelation. The Bible, despite its outward simplicity, is the one book that cannot be translated too much.

But this only heightens the contradiction. For if the Bible is the word of God, its translator must stick as closely as possible to God's way of putting things, avoiding the creative liberties that might be taken with other texts—and this will only make him even more likely to repeat previous translations that have taken the same approach. Once again, then, it must be asked: what language needs so many Bible translations?

Indeed, the truth of the matter is that the Bible has *not* been continually re-translated into English. There have been two great ages of translation activity, the 16th century and the 20th, with little in between.

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The first of these ages, triggered by the Protestant Reformation, which strove to break the Catholic Church's monopoly on Scripture by making it available in the vernacular to every Christian, saw a burst of English Bibles. In less than a hundred years English readers were given, by translators representing Lutheran, Calvinist, Catholic, and Anglican outlooks, the Tyndale Bible, the Coverdale Bible, the Matthews Bible, the Geneva Bible, the Douay-Rheims Bible, the Bishops' Bible, and finally, completed in 1611, the King James Bible. While some of these translations drew freely on others, each ultimately based itself, in its "Old Testament" portion, on the Masoretic Hebrew text.

All of these translations were fairly literal, so that once the King James Version achieved canonical status, subsequent ages of English-speaking Protestants rested content with it. Even the Revised Standard Version of 1885, the first English Bible to challenge the King James in nearly 300 years, was little more than an updating that replaced archaic vocabulary and constructions, changing "thee" and "ye" to "you," cutting down on the ubiquitous "and" that links biblical phrases and sentences, and so on.

It was only a decade or two later that a wave of brand-new Bible translations began. Far outnumbering the 16th century's, these were driven by two motivating forces: the desire to apply to Bible translation the new philological, archeological, and historical knowledge that modern scholarship had made available, and the wish to adopt a freer approach to a Hebrew and Greek text no longer considered the revealed Truth but rather, in the spirit of the 20th century, a great cultural and spiritual document composed by different authors in different periods and best approached with the flexibility that any good literary translation should have. New translations of the Bible were called for precisely because, for many people, the Bible had ceased to be the word of God.

Thus, the two great ages of English Bible translation have been inspired, the one by an ardent faith in the divine authorship of Scripture, the other by an erosion of this faith. Surely there is something contradictory about this, too.

There have been, since the late 19th century, six English translations of the Hebrew Bible by itself, minus the New Testament. All six have been by Jews. Four are of the Hebrew Scriptures in their entirety: M. Friedlander's 1881 *Jewish Family Bible*, the Jewish Publication Society Bibles of 1917 and 1985, and the 2001 *Stone Edition of the Tanach*. The other two are just of the Pentateuch, the Bible's first section, which is read portion by portion in the synagogue over the course of the year: Everett Fox's *The Five Books of Moses* (1995) and, now, a new translation of the same books—Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy—by the well-known literary critic Robert Alter.*

Alter, who has written extensively on the European novel, is also a leading figure in the literary criticism of the Bible—a field, in part pioneered and developed by him, that analyzes biblical texts with little attention to their historical formation or religious content and using the same linguistic and structural methods that are applied to other great works of literature. Besides being the author of several volumes of such criticism, he has in the past published separate translations of Genesis and of the two books of Samuel. Readers familiar with these translations will be prepared for the fact that his English Pentateuch, far from being innovatively "post-faith" in character, retains the literalism of faith-driven translations.

In his introduction to *The Five Books of Moses*, Alter explains why, despite his secular point of view, he has avoided the freer approach of many modern Bible translators—translators who, as he observes, have sought to adjust the Bible's sentence structure to the norms of contemporary English diction, to "disambiguate" its unclear passages, to use different English words where Hebrew repeats the same one, and to substitute modern idioms for English calques of biblical expressions. For him, a maximal adherence to the Bible's phrasing and vocabulary has nothing to do with religious belief. It is a purely literary decision, based on the assessment that the Bible's narrative style, once judged rudimentary by sophisticated standards, is in fact a supremely artful medium whose techniques and strategies call for faithful reproduction.

A great deal of modern translation, Alter holds, shows disrespect for the Bible's artistry by aspiring to improve on it by means of the "heresy of explanation," the "abomination of elegant synonymous variation," the "translation of terms on the basis of immediate context," and the "repackaging of biblical syntax for an audience whose reading experience is assumed to be limited to *Time*, *Newsweek*, and the *New York Times*." What we are given by such translations is not the experience of the Bible but its semantic contents in nondescript language. Indeed, Alter declares, despite its "frequent and at times embarrassing inaccuracies . . . archaisms . . . and insistent substitution of Renaissance English tonalities and rhythms for biblical ones," the King James

* *The Five Books of Moses*. Norton, 1,064 pp., $39.95.

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Version has remained to this day "the closest approach for English readers to the original."

Why then not stand pat with the King James or make do with updating it once more? Because, Alter asserts, it is not, for all its excellence, good enough. If the problem with most modern Bibles is their "shaky sense of English," the King James has a "shaky sense of Hebrew" that cannot be rectified by a superficial touching-up. The prose of the Hebrew Bible is full of fine discriminations—of "a distinctive music, a lovely precision of lexical choice, a meaningful concreteness, and a suppleness of expressive syntax"—that the King James often misses, as do the other translations of its day executed by Christian scholars whose Hebrew education was imperfect. As great an achievement as it is, it can be surpassed. Alter's Pentateuch sets out to do just that.

NOT ALL of the Pentateuch, of course, is of equal literary interest. Alongside the extraordinary narratives of Genesis, the first half of Exodus, and parts of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, there are lengthy passages of a legal or ritual nature that the merely literary reader of the Bible rarely bothers with. It is a tribute to the comprehensiveness of Alter's ambition that he skips not a verse of these, even if this means repeating twelve times, for each chieftain of the twelve tribes of Israel in the book of Numbers, "His offering was one silver bowl, a hundred thirty shekels its weight, one silver basin, seventy shekels by the sanctuary shekel, both of them filled with fine flour mixed with oil for a grain offering." Yet it is not, obviously, by such passages that his translation needs to be judged. For that, one has to turn to the great biblical stories—for example, to that of Joseph and his brothers, to which Alter devoted an entire chapter in his *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981).*

Let us compare several versions of the beginning of this story as told in chapter 37 of Genesis, starting with the King James Version:

> These are the generations of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was feeding the flock with his brethren . . . and Joseph brought unto his father their evil report. Now Israel loved Joseph more than all his children, because he was the son of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors. And when his brethren saw that their father loved him more than all his brethren, they hated him and could not speak peaceably unto him.

The Revised Standard Version has:

> This is the history of the family of Jacob. Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers . . . and Joseph brought an ill report of them to their father. Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he made him a long robe with sleeves. But when his brothers saw that his father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him and could not speak peaceably to him.

Everett Fox gives us:

> These are the begettings of Yaakov. Yosef, seventeen years old, used to tend the sheep along with his brothers. . . . And Yosef brought a report of them, an ill one, to their father. Now Yisrael loved Yosef above all his sons, for he was a son of old age to him, so he made him an ornamented coat. When his brothers saw that it was he whom their father loved above all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak to him in peace.

The translator Stephen Mitchell's contemporary version of Genesis omits the story's opening entirely:

> Now Jacob loved Joseph more than all his other sons, because he was a child of his old age, and he made him a coat of many colors. And when Joseph's brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his other sons, they hated him, and they would not even greet him.

And here is Alter:

> This is the lineage of Jacob—Joseph, seventeen years old, was tending the flock with his brothers. . . . And Joseph brought ill report of them to their father. And Israel loved Joseph more than all his sons, for he was the child of his old age, and he made him an ornamented tunic. And his brothers saw it was he their father loved more than all his brothers, and they hated him and could not speak a kind word to him.

In comparing these translations with each other and with the original Hebrew, one's first observation is that Alter's is syntactically the most literal, more so even than the King James. Thus, whereas all the other English versions seek to mitigate the repetitive Hebrew "and" (the King James replaces it once with "now" and eliminates it a second time by subordinating "they hated him" to "when"), Alter alone preserves each of its six appearances.

In his introduction, Alter justifies his systematic retention of the biblical "and," despite its seeming monotony, by pointing out quite correctly that it is not just a formal grammatical element but an impor-

* This chapter, like several others in *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, was originally published in COMMENTARY—ED.

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tant stylistic device that "makes manifest in a narrative . . . a series of more or less discrete events, or micro-events, in a chain." Indeed, one might go beyond this and argue that much of the power of biblical narrative depends on this discreteness, which dramatically foregrounds each event—"And Joseph brought ill report. . . . And Israel loved Joseph. . . . And his brothers saw it was he their father loved"—against a cloudy background whose details the reader is imaginatively forced to fill in.

This is an excellent illustration of why Alter is right to believe, on purely literary grounds, in the importance of close translation of the Bible. The empty spaces between one "and" and the next lure us into them; they are as much responsible for the enormous amount of exegesis that the Bible has attracted as are its religious claims. By subordinating "they hated him" to "when his brethren saw that his father loved him more," the King James is telling us *why* Joseph's brothers hated him—committing the "heresy of explanation," in Alter's words—instead of letting us draw our own conclusions (which may be the same as its, but are ours), as the biblical narrative wishes us to do.

Lexically, too, Alter sticks close to the Hebrew text, sometimes with marvelous results. A few verses further on, for instance, after relating Joseph's dreams of future grandeur, the Bible tells us how his brothers, seeing him come looking for them while they are pasturing their father's flock, say, "Here comes that *ba'al ha-halomot!*" *Halomot* are dreams, while Hebrew usage permits *ba'al* to be translated in one of two ways—either literally, as an independent word meaning "owner of" or "master of," or as a grammatical marker like the English "-er" in "farmer" and "singer." From Jerome on, we find all Bible translators opting for the latter, that is, for "dreamer"—all except Alter, whose "Here comes that dream-master!" perfectly captures the bitter scorn that Joseph's brothers feel for him.

Elsewhere, on the other hand, Alter has borrowed freely from his predecessors, as when he follows the Revised Standard Version (which is in turn based on the King James) in translating the Hebrew *va-yavei et dibatam ra'ah* as "brought ill report of them," or Everett Fox (who took the phrase from the 1985 Jewish Publication Society Bible) in rendering *k'tonet pasim* as "ornamented tunic."

Both of these borrowings are curious. "Ill report" for *dibah ra'ah*, which means slander or evil talk, is hardly idiomatic English today and makes Alter appear inconsistent. Why, if he preferred William Tyndale's homey "could not speak one kind word to him" to the King James's "did not speak peaceably to him" (which adheres more or less to the Latin Vulgate's *nec poterant ei quicquam pacificum loqui*, itself a literal translation of the Hebrew *ve-lo yakhlu dabro le'shalom*), did he not choose something more natural like "said evil things about them"? (Tyndale's "brought unto their father an evil saying that was of them" could have served as the basis here, too.)

"Ornamented tunic" is even more puzzling, inasmuch as, standing at a junction of translation history and biblical scholarship, it rejects a phrase—Joseph's "coat of many colors"—that has spoken evocatively to generations of English Bible readers.

The precise meaning of the Hebrew *k'tonet pasim*, the biblical term for the luckless garment that Jacob gives Joseph as a token of his love, is undeterminable; although *kutonet* clearly denotes a coat or tunic, the meaning of *pas*, of which *pasim* is the plural, has never been clear. Alongside an early rabbinic interpretation as "stripes," there is another of "fine, thin material," and still another of "long-sleeved" (hence the Revised Standard Version's rendition). The great medieval Bible scholar Abraham ibn Ezra thought it meant "embroiderery." The Septuagint translates it as *poikilon*, "many-colored," and the Vulgate as *polymita*, "richly patterned." The Septuagint also influenced Martin Luther's *bunten Rock*, a "colorful coat," which suggested to William Tyndale his "coat of many colors," subsequently taken over by the King James.

Contemporary scholars are not sure what a *k'tonet pasim* was, either. The 1985 JPS Bible, which came up with "ornamented tunic," adds in a note that Egyptian tomb paintings show "Semitic men and women wearing multicolored tunics draped over one shoulder and reaching below the knees." Alter's own note to this verse cites an ancient cuneiform text suggesting that a *k'tonet pasim* may have been "a tunic with appliqué ornamentation," although there is also "a 14th-century B.C.E. Egyptian fresco showing captive Canaanite noblemen adorned with tunics made of longitudinal panels sewn together"—in other words, vertical stripes.

Alter's adoption of the JPS wording strikes one as mistaken; the scholarly evidence supports "coat of many colors" just as well, and, as one of the best-known English biblical phrases, it has a tender and lively pathos, lacking in "ornamented tunic," that turns to heartbreak when the same garment is returned to Jacob smeared with blood. Still, this is not really the point; the best translators can and do err. More noteworthy is the intricate play between the Bible translations of the past and the contemporary translator, who can hardly make a move

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without following in the footsteps of some of them.

Sometimes these footsteps show us one translator after another heading down the same false trail. The Hebrew of Genesis, for instance, tells us that Joseph was cast by his brothers into a *bor* in the *midbar*—two words that Jerome, who lived in Palestine and knew its landscape and way of life, accurately translated as *cisterna vetera*, an old water cistern (the narrative tells us it was dry), *in solitudine*, in a lonely place. But because the word *bor* in Hebrew can also denote a plain pit, and *midbar* can signify, besides semi-arid grazing land, actual desert, the great Protestant translators of the 16th century, who lived in a Europe where cisterns and gradations of arid zones were unknown, had Joseph thrown into "one of the pits in the wilderness," leaving the reader to guess why his brothers and their flock wandered off into a wasteland full of holes.

These words have survived in every notable English Bible translation to this day, and Alter, perhaps out of sheer inertia, has gone along with them, even while observing in a note that Joseph's "pit" was a cistern. In the grand sense, it would seem, originality in Bible translation is no longer possible; the translator struggling to find his own voice repeatedly finds it drowned out by what the critic Harold Bloom has called "belatedness," that dilatory arrival upon a scene in which all that can be said and done appears to have been said and done. At most, a new word here, a different turn of phrase there: what more can another Bible translation offer?

IN FACT the Alter translation offers a good deal. It is generally sensible, it is fluent, and it strikes a judicious balance between an English that is contemporary and one sufficiently old-fashioned to convey that it speaks of events happening long ago in a world far removed from our own. When Alter's Joseph says to his brothers, "Listen, pray, to this dream that I dreamed. And, look, we were binding sheaves in the field," "pray" does the work of distancing the story while "look" creates a sense of immediacy. We can actually feel Joseph's excitement—what Alter, in his unfailingly intelligent commentary that is itself worth the price of the volume, calls the young dreamer's "wide-eyed amazement and perhaps naiveté."

Nevertheless, Alter's own rules get in the way here. After Joseph has repeated "look" twice more in the same sentence ("and, look, my sheaf arose and actually stood up, and, look, your sheaves drew round and bowed to my sheaf"), we begin to feel that the translation is overdoing it. Wide-eyed amazement has become a verbal tic.

Alter's thrice-repeated "look" is his translation of the Hebrew word *hineh*, which literally means "here" but functions in this passage, as it often does in the Bible, to introduce a narrative shift from the past tense to the present and back again. (The actual sequence of Hebrew tenses in this passage is: "And Joseph said [to his brothers], 'Listen, pray, to this dream that I dreamed—*hineh* we are binding sheaves in the field, and *hineh* my sheaf arose and actually stood up, and *hineh* your sheaves drew round and bowed down to my sheaf.") The possibility of free movement between past and present is a characteristic feature of Hebrew prose and has something of the effect of a zoom lens; when the lens is snapped into place, often by *hineh*, the distance between us and the story collapses. In English, on the other hand, although this can be done colloquially (e.g., "I was walking down the street and along comes this man and says that he knows me"), it is impermissible in formal prose, in which all the Bible translator has to work with is the *hineh* itself.

In the King James, *hineh* is generally translated as "behold," at times varied with "lo," so that Genesis 37:7 is rendered: "For, behold, we were binding sheaves in the field, and, lo, my sheaf arose and also stood upright, and, behold, your sheaves stood round about and made obeisance to my sheaf." William Tyndale, going a step further, omitted the third *hineh* entirely, while Martin Luther outdid him by omitting the last two while translating the first, in imitation of the Latin Vulgate's *putabam*, as *mich deuchte*, or "methought," as Tyndale has it elsewhere. The 1985 JPS Bible follows this double omission while beginning the verse, "There we were binding sheaves in the field. . . ." Each of these solutions is better than Alter's, whose second and third "look" seem more a matter of abstract principle than of verisimilitudinous speech. A touch of "synonymous elegance," or of "translation of terms on the basis of immediate context," would not have hurt here.

On the whole, though he is right in a general way, Alter makes too much, I think, of the refusal of older translations to tamper with the Bible's diction. In point of fact, every one of the modern "sins" he enumerates can be found in the ancients, too. The repackaging of biblical syntax? "*Videntes autem*," Jerome's Latin says, "*fratres eius quod a patre plus cunctis filiis amaretur oderant eum*": "Thus seeing that their brother was more loved than all his sons by their father, they hated him." The heresy of explanation? The Hebrew Bible's "And Reuben returned to the pit and, behold, there is no Joseph," became Martin Luther's "*Als nun Ruben wieder zur Grube kam und fand Joseph nicht darin*": "Now when Reuben returned to the pit and did not find Joseph in it." The abomi-

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nation of synonymous elegance? Tyndale, who gave us "a coat of many colors," translates it further on in the same chapter, when it is handed bloodied to Jacob, as "that gay coat."

Good translators cannot be dogmatic; there are no rules they may not break when it works. Yet what "works" with the Bible is a difficult question, because, as Alter's introduction points out, it is often debatable "what level, or perhaps levels, of style is represented by biblical Hebrew." Translation is ordinarily a kind of impersonation in which the translator pretends to be the author writing in another language. But whom, whether we call him Moses or J, E, P, or D, as the supposed different strands of biblical narrative are labeled by historical "source criticism," is one impersonating when one translates the Pentateuch? Its world is so different from our own—far more than Dante's, far more even than Homer's—that we cannot know. Although Alter declares that "It is well-known that in biblical dialogue all the characters speak proper literary Hebrew, with no intimations of slang," can we really be so sure that when Joseph brings his father "an ill report" of his brothers, the biblical audience did not hear that he "badmouthed" them?

In the end, we are trapped in a circle: a translation of a biblical passage "works" if it corresponds to the "level of style" we suppose biblical narration to have been using, but our notion of what this "level of style" is depends on which translations of it "work." Bible translation is inductive, a matter of hit-or-miss rather than of the pursuit of a pre-conceived ideal that is the literary translator's normal mode of operation. Is Alter's Pentateuch better than the King James? In places it is and in places it isn't, just as the King James sometimes does and sometimes does not improve on Tyndale, and so on down the line. Perhaps the ultimate English Bible will not have a single innovation of its own. It will simply be a culling of the best choices that preceded it, its compiler a systematic anthologist.

Is there, then, in the final analysis, any difference between a "faith translation" of the Bible and a good literary translation like Alter's? Does it matter whether the translator does or does not believe that the Bible is God's word?

Let us put the question more concretely. When Reuben, Joseph's oldest brother who hopes to rescue him and bring him safely home, returns to discover that Joseph has been sold in his absence to a caravan of traders descending to Egypt, Alter translates: "And Reuben came back to the pit, and, look, Joseph was not in the pit, and he rent his garments, and he came back to his brothers, and he said, 'The boy is gone, and I, where can I turn?'" The King James has: "And Reuben returned unto the pit; and behold, Joseph was not in the pit; and he rent his clothes. And he returned unto his brethren, and said, The child is not; and I, whither shall I go?" Apart from the modernizing moves that Alter's translation makes—"to" for "unto," "look" for "behold," "brothers" for "brethren," "where" for "whither"—do we experience these two translations differently?

Perhaps not—but this begs the question. It is *because* of Alter's modernizing that our experience is different. The ancientness of the King James invests it, for many readers, with a sacredness that Alter's *The Five Books of Moses* does not have.

And yet the King James, too, was "modern" when it first appeared, even if it permitted itself certain archaisms just as Alter permits himself "pray." Does this mean that it was no more sacred then than Alter's translation is now, but has become so by a process of aging?

To this one must say yes and no—no, because in the early 17th century it was still universally acknowledged that a translation of the Bible was a translation of a sacred book; and yes, because time sacralizes. Consider two similar chairs, each with a plain back, seat, and legs, one newly made by a carpenter and one 400 years old. Does not sitting, however uncomfortably, in the old chair, its wood cracked and burnished by use, produce a shiver that the new chair does not? So many generations have sat in it and handed it down that it leads us back and back through time until something timeless adheres to us, too.

Words are like chairs in this respect, which is why, in the many contemporary controversies between religious traditionalists and modernizers over the wording of liturgies, the traditionalists nearly always have it right. It is precisely the archaic and the foreign in an ancient text—the uncomfortable—that communicates the holy. "Where can I turn?" does not make us shiver.

"Whither shall I go?" also approximates more closely the experience of reading the Bible in Hebrew. Although the story of Joseph is perfectly comprehensible in the original to the average Hebrew speaker today, its language too is archaic, the gap between it and modern Hebrew rather comparable to that between the King James's English and our own. Reuben's *ana ani va*, literally, "Where am I to come to," falls on a 21st-century ear very much like a 17th-century expression.

The difference, then, is not so much the faith out

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of which the King James Bible was translated as the hundreds of years in which faith was put into it.

For Jewish readers of the Alter Pentateuch, this is no obstacle. Jews have only one sacred Bible, and it is the Hebrew one. Apart from the Aramaic Targum, no Jewish Bible translation has ever been venerated or regarded as more than a useful study aid. The most popular Pentateuch among English-speaking Jews today, now under challenge from its 1985 successor, is probably still the 1917 Jewish Publication Society Bible, an essentially Judaized King James that is, in its Soncino Press edition with facing Hebrew and English texts, standard issue in numerous synagogues. Published in a similar bilingual format, Alter's *Five Books of Moses* could compete advantageously with either.

For believing Christians, the King James Version remains unsurpassed. And for those who would read the Bible as mere literature? For them the biggest obstacle is the Bible itself, since, despite its literary brilliance, which Alter has helped us to see, it remains stubbornly resistant to being read in this way. "It is not you who sent me here but God," Joseph says to his brothers when, now the most powerful man in Egypt beside Pharaoh, he reveals himself to them at the end of his and their great drama—and although he is not the most God-centered character in the Bible, any brother of his who dismissed this remark would be showing, in his eyes, a poor understanding of what happened. To read the Bible merely as literature is to read it not so much without faith as in bad faith, although what better faith can be hoped for from the faithless than the faith in literature, which alone holds that every word in the Bible counts even if it is not God's, would be hard to say.

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The Election and the Jewish Vote

Jay Lefkowitz

American Jews constitute only 3 percent of the voting public, and have cast a majority of their votes for the Democratic nominee in every presidential election since 1916 (the first for which we have data). Yet, every four years, the minuscule Jewish vote generates a great deal of curious attention and analysis. Last year was no exception. Only days after the November election, Republican activists began pointing to a significant increase in Jewish turnout for George W. Bush over his first presidential run in 2000. Their counterparts in the Democratic party were no less quick to point out, despite Bush's undeniable gains, that not only did the majority of Jews remain in the Democratic column but the President's own level of Jewish support was significantly under the historical norm for other successful Republican candidates.

As with many claims rooted in statistics, both sides were right. While Bush did increase his share of the Jewish vote to 25 percent—almost a third higher than he had polled in 2000 and more than twice what his father accumulated in 1992—he still came in far below the 33 percent averaged by the four other postwar Republicans to have won the White House through 1988: Eisenhower, Nixon, Reagan, and Bush, Sr. in his first race.

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But why all the fuss? The central fact about the Jewish vote is, after all, not how changeable but how stable it is. American Jews do not merely favor Democrats; they are the second most reliable bloc of Democratic voters in the country, exceeded only by African-Americans. One has to go all the way back to the election of Warren Harding in 1920 to find a Republican who gained more than 40 percent of the Jewish vote.

Still, if there is little mystery about which party the Jews will support in any given presidential election—the range is consistently between 60 to 90 percent for the Democrat—what remains worth considering are the factors that trigger variations in voting patterns within that range, and what may be learned from this for the future. In that sense, the readers of post-election tea leaves have a point.

Although an oft-told narrative credits Franklin D. Roosevelt with forging the unbreakable bond between Jews and the Democratic party, the story actually starts four years earlier than Roosevelt's election. It was the 1928 candidacy of New York Governor Al Smith, an Irishman and the first Catholic ever to seek the nation's highest office, that initially galvanized the Jewish community on behalf of the Democrats.

The reasons seem plain for the time. The American Jewish community, which had increased by millions during the first three decades of the 20th century, consisted mostly of poor immigrants from East-

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ern Europe, where some had also swum in the currents of left-wing politics. In this country, like Smith's co-religionists, Jews had been excluded by the Protestant establishment from economic and educational opportunities. Jewish voters, therefore, felt an instinctive kinship with Smith, giving the Democrat more than 70 percent of their votes (a significant jump over any prior presidential election) in his losing bid for the White House.

What we see here is the first and still the bedrock determinant of Jewish electoral behavior—namely, an affinity for the liberal social and economic policies historically associated with the Democrats and a mistrust of the party linked with the country's Protestant "establishment." But, although often and correctly adduced as a central issue for Jews, liberalism is not their only issue. Another came to the forefront in 1948, with the founding of the state of Israel.

Since that year, a key factor for Jewish voters in every election has been their perception of which candidate will best attend to the security of the Jewish state and best deal with the terrorism that has long been directed at it. Harry Truman, the Democrat who played a key role in the creation of Israel, got 75 percent of the Jewish vote in 1948. But in 1952 and 1956, Truman's Democratic successor Adlai Stevenson did not fare nearly so well among Jews; his opponent, General Dwight D. Eisenhower, received 36 percent of their vote that year and 40 percent four years later. Clearly, although a liberal social agenda was still key for the majority of American Jews, a new litmus test was also being applied: who seemed most likely to support Israel, with military force if necessary? Rightly or wrongly, the answer for a sizable minority was the military hero who at the end of World War II had liberated Jews from Hitler's death camps.

But the 1950's uptick in Jewish support for Republicans was short-lived. With the candidacy of John F. Kennedy, the community returned overwhelmingly to the Democratic camp. Whether Israel's future did not seem so precarious as it had a decade earlier, or whether Kennedy had successfully positioned himself as another Irish Catholic "outsider"—or whether his opponent Richard Nixon simply seemed too antipathetic to their concerns—82 percent of American Jews went for Kennedy. In doing so, interestingly, they chose to overlook Kennedy's father's earlier lobbying against war with Nazi Germany as well as his own close relationship to Senators William Fulbright and the Republican Joseph McCarthy, two figures who were hardly friends of Israel. As for the two elections following Kennedy's assassination in 1963, the Jewish community, still in collective mourning, voted for Lyndon Johnson by 90 percent in 1964 and for Hubert Humphrey by 81 percent in 1968.

IN THE 1964 election, as it happens, still another element was added to the calculus of Jewish voting behavior. In nominating Arizona Senator Barry Goldwater as its candidate, the Republican party had started down the path of cultural conservatism. In Goldwater's coalition were not only small-government libertarians but also a large number of Southern evangelicals worried both by the Democrats' racial agenda and by the advancing liberal culture of the early 1960's. Jews, in giving Johnson an even larger share of their vote in 1964 than had gone to Kennedy four years earlier, were in part signaling their own concern over the potential influence of these fundamentalist Christians. What particularly exercised them was the specter of a blurring of the strict separation of government and religion that had by then become a dogma of secular politics.

The calculus changed again in 1972. Richard Nixon, who swept to a landslide victory nationwide, increased his share of the Jewish vote from the approximately 17 percent he had won in both 1960 and 1968 to fully 35 percent. The reason? Once again, the military situation in the Middle East appeared threatening; Nixon's strong record of support for Israel, combined with a growing recognition among Jews of the critical link between a strong America and a safe Israel, played a significant role. Conversely, the Democrats in 1972 were plagued by anti-Israel and even anti-Semitic sentiments in the left wing of the party, while their candidate, George McGovern, was perceived as an isolationist. (As it turned out, increased Jewish support for Nixon in 1972 was well warranted: the airlift he ordered to resupply Israel during the October 1973 war may well have saved it from being pushed into the sea.)

The sense that Republicans were becoming more trustworthy on Israel than Democrats was underscored for many Jews by the presidency of Jimmy Carter. Shortly after his entry into the White House, Carter, who had captured 71 percent of the Jewish vote, called for a "homeland" for the Palestinians, and his UN ambassador, Donald McHenry, voted for a viciously worded resolution condemning Israel for settlement activity in Jerusalem. This was the same Carter whose response to the taking of more than 60 American hostages by Iranian fundamentalists in 1979 was widely condemned as ineffectual.

All this surely had something to do with Ronald Reagan's stellar performance with the Jewish com-

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munity in 1980—39 percent for a conservative Republican with a reputation as a lightweight. In the same election Carter managed no more than 45 percent of the Jewish vote, with third-party candidate John Anderson getting the remainder.

Reagan's fierce opposition to the Soviet Union at a time when the Soviets were the leading sponsors of Arab terrorism, as well as his endorsement of a strategic relationship with Israel in 1981, reinforced his popularity with the pro-Israel segment of the community. In 1984 he won 31 percent of the Jewish vote running against a candidate, Walter Mondale, boasting his own strong record of support for Israel and social and economic views much more in tune with the Jewish community's. So deep were Reagan's reserves of good will among Jews that his Vice President, George H.W. Bush, came to office in 1988 with 35 percent of their vote. He did so, moreover, on a Reaganite platform that explicitly endorsed prayer in the public schools, called for a constitutional amendment banning abortion, and even advocated a daily Pledge of Allegiance—positions farther to the right than the previous (or the current) Republican platform. With the situation in the Middle East remaining perilous, concern for Israel was once again more pressing.

If the three presidential contests of the 1980's seemed to mark a high point in Jewish support for Republican candidates, the bottom fell out in 1992. Since then, even counting George W. Bush's 25 percent this past November, Republican candidates have averaged about 17.5 percent of the Jewish vote.

In that 1992 election, the elder Bush's Jewish support dropped from 35 to 11 percent, an unprecedented decline. Just as with Jimmy Carter in 1980, Jews turned against a sitting President in part for his performance on Israel. Not only did the elder Bush have a frigid relationship with Israel's then-prime minister, Yitzhak Shamir, but his Secretary of State, James Baker, was regarded as overtly hostile to Israel. In one press conference, Bush dismayed the Jewish community by stating, in reference to support for Israel in the halls of Congress, that he was but "one little lonely guy" against "something like a thousand lobbyists on the Hill."

If that were not reason enough for many Jews to desert the GOP in 1992, the church-state issue had again risen to the fore, this time with an anti-Semitic tinge. Pat Buchanan, in a now notorious speech at the Republican convention that year, railed against the counterculture and the triumph of liberal social policies, proclaiming that "there is a religious war going on in our country for the soul of America." Only a year earlier, during the debate over the first Gulf war, Buchanan, in words reminiscent of Charles Lindbergh's statements in the early days of World War II, had said: "[T]here are only two groups that are beating the drums for war in the Middle East, the Israeli defense ministry and its amen corner in the United States." It was against this backdrop that the Democrat Bill Clinton proceeded, during his two runs for the presidency, to garner an average of 79 percent of the Jewish vote.

Which brings us at last to George W. Bush. In 2000, this Republican candidate faced an especially uphill battle in appealing for Jewish votes. On the three or four critical indicators—social and economic policy, Israel, religion/anti-Semitism—the first President Bush had already soured American Jews on the family name. As for then-Governor Bush himself, he had little record of his own to counteract this: no foreign-policy experience to speak of, lots of connections to the traditionally pro-Arab oil industry, and little personal exposure to the organized Jewish community. To top it off, he was running against two Democrats with long and deep pro-Israel records, one of them a sitting Vice President to a man immensely popular in the Jewish community and the other an Orthodox Jew.

As things turned out, the surprise was not that George W. Bush received only 19 percent of the Jewish vote in 2000 but rather that, in a race against Al Gore and Joseph Lieberman, he actually did receive 19 percent—3 points over Bob Dole four years earlier and almost double what his father had polled eight years earlier. From that base, Bush proceeded four years later to make still more significant inroads—this, despite the fact that American Jews as a whole are still about as far as one can get from the traditional Republican profile, live predominantly in the large cities of the Northeast and the West Coast, tilt significantly to the secular end of the religious divide, and remain very liberal on social and moral issues, from prayer in the schools to abortion and gay marriage.

At first glance, it would appear that Bush's increased support from Jews was due to his exceptionally strong record of support for Israel. Many freely acknowledge that he has been a better friend to Israel than any of his predecessors; even Joseph Lieberman, while campaigning for John Kerry in Florida a week before the election, made a point of this. But while this was certainly a factor for some Jews, it does not seem to have been the dominant one.

According to a survey in Ohio and Florida on election day, only 20 percent of Jews voting for Bush said

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his relationship to Israel was the primary reason for their choice, while 55 percent cited his efforts against Islamic terrorism. What this suggests is that, for a significant number of American Jews, concern over Israel's security has merged with terrorism and anti-Semitism into a single broad issue. And here a major shift in perception must be acknowledged. Whereas the threat of anti-Semitism was once almost universally perceived by American Jews as stemming from the Right, and in particular from fundamentalist Christianity, now a portion of the community has come to understand both contemporary anti-Semitism and the threat of physical violence against Jews and Israel as deriving from a very different source: not just Islamism but also the international Left and its supporters in the liberal media.

BUSH DID particularly well in three segments of the Jewish community: the Orthodox, recently arrived Russians, and younger men.

Of the three, the Russians appear to have been motivated especially by Bush's record on Israel. That is not so surprising: nearly all of the newly arrived Russian Jews in this country have relatives who live in Israel.* Little known outside their own communities, these Russians comprise nearly 10 percent of the total Jewish population in the United States, with a very large concentration in New York City and sizable representation in Los Angeles, Chicago, Boston, San Francisco, and Philadelphia. Only four years earlier, this sub-group had thrown its support to Al Gore, which makes them that most desirable of electoral commodities: swing voters.

Bush also did well among Jewish men between the ages of eighteen and forty-nine, winning, according to the veteran pollster Frank Luntz, an estimated 39 percent of their votes. That is certainly a good sign for Republicans going forward—perhaps as good a sign as the fact that quite a few Jews gave generously to the President's campaign. A number of "Rangers" and "Pioneers"—those raising more than $200,000 and $100,000, respectively—were Jews, and several of these had been large Gore-Lieberman givers in the previous election.

But the biggest story of 2004 may be that in one salient respect, the Jewish community started voting like the rest of America. In the general population, individuals who attend church more than once a week voted for Bush by a margin of 65 percent to 35 percent, while the figure for those who never attend church was almost directly the inverse—36 percent to 62 percent. An analogous pattern was evident among Jews as well. According to Luntz, Orthodox Jews voted 69 percent for Bush, while Reform Jews gave him only 15 percent and Conservative Jews 23 percent. Bush did well among Jews of all denominations who attend synagogue on a weekly basis, winning 40 percent of their votes compared to just 18 percent for those who rarely or never attend. As with the Russian Jews, the Orthodox, too, changed their vote from 2000, when they went for Al Gore by 64 percent.

The 2004 results were not entirely a matter of chance. Anticipating the role that religion would play in the election, the Bush campaign worked hard to turn out the vote in observant communities, including several large Orthodox Jewish ones. The Orthodox were targeted for two reasons. First, while pro-Israel sentiment is strong throughout the Jewish community, Bush's pro-Israel record could be expected to resonate especially among the Orthodox, who tend to make regular visits to Israel and among whom the hard-line policies represented first by Menachem Begin and later by Ariel Sharon have been most vocally supported. Second, the Orthodox are the one sector of the community that is not alienated by Bush's embrace of the religious Right and its social agenda. Orthodox Jews are opposed to gay marriage; they generally favor vouchers for parochial-school education; and, unlike Reform and Conservative Jews, for whom abortion rights are a political imperative, they are generally untroubled by the Republican party's pro-life stand.

Little wonder, therefore, that pro-Bush fervor among Orthodox Jews rivaled that in the evangelical community. In the heavily Orthodox Flatbush and Boro Park sections of Brooklyn, Bush won about 30,000 more votes in 2004 than in 2000, and in Boro Park alone he received 82 percent of the total votes cast. In one Brooklyn precinct, Bush increased his total by over 106 percent from the previous election, helping to tip that precinct from the Democratic to the Republican column.

The same pattern was seen in New Jersey suburbs like Englewood and Teaneck that contain large Orthodox communities. In Ocean County, New Jersey, home to the ultra-Orthodox Lakewood Yeshiva, Bush came close to doubling the number of votes he had won in 2000. Out in Michigan, another large pro-Bush shift was seen in the Oak Park section of Detroit, where most of that city's Orthodox Jews reside.

In the two swing states of Ohio and Florida, where the GOP campaign mounted an intensive get-out-the-vote drive in Orthodox neighborhoods, it was rewarded with a move toward Bush that was

* Indeed, they voted for Bush in roughly the same proportion—70 percent—as did the more than 40,000 Americans living in Israel who cast ballots in the election.

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far more consequential for the outcome of the general election than any comparable shift in safely Democratic New York or New Jersey. In Beachwood, a suburb of Cleveland with a vibrant Orthodox community, the President jumped from a 5,500-vote deficit against Gore in 2000 to a 2,200-vote margin over Kerry—an increase of more than 73 percent. In South Florida, several precincts in Broward, Palm Beach, and Dade counties showed increases of more than 30 percent over 2000.

What, then, can we conclude about the Jewish vote today? George Bush has clearly made real progress, largely thanks to his strong pro-Israel record and his prosecution of the war on terrorism—a war against the biggest enemies of both America and Israel. He has also been outspoken about the rising anti-Semitism pervading the European continent. In a presidential election where every ballot really did count, his achievement of 25 percent of the Jewish vote should not be minimized.

As far as the Republican party is concerned, Orthodox Jews clearly hold the greatest potential. Even though they make up only a tenth of the Jewish community, they are growing much faster than the secular branches, which are shrinking due to assimilation, intermarriage, and lower birth rates. As Orthodox Jewry increases its numbers, we may conceivably see a softening of the once unvarying commitment of Jewish voters to an impermeable wall of separation between church and state and a greater receptivity to the "values" positions associated with the GOP. Electorally, in swing states like Ohio, Florida, Pennsylvania, Michigan, and New Jersey, this small fraction within a small American group could make a difference in close races.

Still, a *major* realignment of the Jewish vote seems highly improbable. In the broader Jewish community, the cultural and religious agenda of the Republican party continues to exercise little or no appeal; indeed, other things being equal, most American Jews are likelier to vote for a candidate whose key issues are abortion rights and no prayer in the public schools than one who vigorously defends Israel's right to use force to protect itself or who denounces anti-Semitism in the UN. Despite the clear evidence that the main source of hostility to Jews and Israel today is the political Left, American Jews in their majority still believe that the Right is more dangerous to them. As long as they continue to place secular liberal values ahead of Jewish interests, it will be hard for Republicans to do much better than the 25 percent received by George Bush, a man whose record of protecting Israel and Jewish interests may be unparalleled.

In short, Republicans have a long way to go if they are to reach, let alone surpass, the levels achieved among Jews during the Eisenhower and Reagan years. For that to happen, either the Orthodox and Russian Jewish communities will have to increase their numbers exponentially or the Democrats will have to nominate a candidate who is explicitly anti-Israel. In the foreseeable future, neither appears likely to happen.

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OBSERVATIONS

When Muslims Convert

Daveed Gartenstein-Ross

IN THE bustling religious marketplace of modern America, conversions out of one faith and into another are not exactly news. They happen every day, across the full spectrum of belief. But some conversions resonate more than others, especially at a time when the U.S. finds itself at war with terrorists who draw their inspiration from one of the world's great religions.

Consider the case of Jean-Michelle Ajon, the subject of a 2002 article in the women's fashion magazine *Marie Claire*. Raised a Catholic in New York City, Ajon had been thinking about converting to Islam during the summer before 9/11. After the attacks, a remark that she overheard while working in Manhattan—"We should bomb everyone, the whole Arab world"—strengthened her resolve, and she soon made her *shahadah* (declaration of faith), thus entering the fold of Islam. Her new faith, Ajon explained to *Marie Claire*, had improved her life. "I used to be very aggressive," she said. "Now, I am more patient—and spiritually fulfilled."

Ajon's story—no doubt seen by her editors as an inspiring antidote to widespread anti-Muslim bigotry in the United States—has been multiplied by many other, similar stories over the past several years. But far less attention has been paid to voyages in the opposite direction, that is, outward *from* Islam. In fact, thousands of Muslims in the West embrace Christianity each year, and the courage they must muster to do so is of an entirely different order from the bravado of someone protesting against supposedly pervasive social prejudice. These converts stand accused, rather, of apostasy, a transgression against Islam whose consequences, even in the sheltering confines of the West, are always serious—and sometimes deadly.

IN THE Islamic world, there is a broad consensus, both popular and scholarly, that apostates deserve to be killed. A rich theological and intellectual tradition, stretching as far back as Muhammad and his companions, supports this position. Though official proceedings against those who reject Islam are fairly rare—in part, no doubt, because most keep their conversion a closely held secret—apostasy is punishable by death in Afghanistan, Comoros, Iran, Mauritania, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, and Yemen.* It is also illegal in Jordan, Kuwait, Malaysia, the Maldives, Oman, and Qatar.

The greatest threat to apostates in the Muslim world derives not from the state, however, but from private individuals who take punishment into their own hands. In Bangladesh, for example, a native-born Muslim-turned-Christian evangelist was stabbed to death in the spring of 2003 while returning home from a film version of the Gospel of Luke. As another Bangladeshi apostate told the U.S. Newswire, "If a Muslim converts to Christianity, now he cannot live in this country. It is not safe. The fundamentalism is increasing more and more."

Because of this ideological environment, every apostate in the Muslim world must live in constant fear of death. And unfortunately, as harsh

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*All of these countries either have explicit anti-apostasy laws or decree capital punishment for the broader offense of blasphemy.

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recent experience has taught us, Islamist ideology is hardly confined to the Muslim world alone. Advocates of jihad, to say nothing of actual terrorists, can be found in every corner of the West. More disturbing, because of what it says about our own ideological self-defenses, is the respectability that has been granted to spokesmen for Islamic fundamentalism who have learned to promote their agenda in our own idiom, even as they argue that mere conversion out of Islam should be considered a crime.

A PRIME example in this connection is Syed Mumtaz Ali, the president of the Canadian Society of Muslims. The Indian-born Mumtaz Ali was the first South Asian lawyer in Ontario when he set up practice more than 40 years ago, and has been the intellectual force behind the Islamic Institute of Civil Justice, a group dedicated to applying *shari'a* (Islamic law) to certain civil disputes in the province. Ontario's Arbitration Act, passed in 1991, paved the way for this campaign—and for Mumtaz Ali's emergence as a respected public figure—by granting religious authorities the power to arbitrate in family and property matters so long as the parties involved gave their consent (and with the proviso that the decisions can be appealed to Canadian courts).

Instituting even so restricted a version of *shari'a* has been controversial in Canada, especially among feminists rightly worried about its effects on Muslim women. But for Mumtaz Ali, this first, modest concession to the claims of Islam has been just the beginning. As he declared in defending the *shari'a* tribunal, "freedom of religion as guaranteed under Canada's constitution means not only freedom to practice and propagate religion but also to be able to be governed by one's religious laws in all aspects of one's life—spiritual as well as temporal."

What Mumtaz Ali meant by this portentous remark is made clear in an astonishing essay under his name that can be found on the website of the Canadian Society of Muslims.* Not only does he affirm there the traditional proposition that apostates must "choose between Islam and the sword," but he argues that, if Canada is to be true to its own Charter of Rights and Freedoms, it must allow the country's Muslim community to punish those of its members who renounce or traduce their faith.

> [W]hat such a large segment of the Canadian minority believes as a precept of their faith/religion ought to be fully recognized if the Charter's provision respecting *freedom of religion* are [sic] to have any real meaning. . . . Failing [to incorporate Islamic law concerning apostasy and blasphemy into the laws of Canada] will be a flagrant breach of equality rights. . . . Failing to interpret the guaranteed rights and freedoms of Muslims in accordance with the true spirit of multiculturalism results in the effective denial of this fundamental philosophy of the Canadian constitution. This is a tragic departure from that cherished "tolerance" (the real tolerance) which is the distinguishing quality of a cultured people.

Mumtaz Ali allows that recognizing Islamic law in this context "does not necessarily entail any obligation to *enforce* the Islamic punishment for blasphemy/apostasy within the Canadian jurisdiction" (emphasis added). Apostates, that is, will not have to be stoned or beheaded. But plainly *some* punishment by the community itself is in order, and Canada, as Mumtaz Ali would have it, has no right to stand in the way.

A still more original apologist for the harsh treatment of apostates who reside in the West is Ali Khan, a law professor at Washburn University in Kansas. In a recent issue of the *Cumberland Law Review*, Khan suggested that Islam can be seen as a form of intellectual property, and Muslims as "trustees" who have vowed to protect their faith's "knowledge-based assets."

These assertions, on their face, seem innocuous enough, if a bit absurd. But Khan's argument quickly takes an ominous turn. If Islam is understood as intellectual property, he contends, the faith should enjoy what he calls "the right to integrity"—that is, its trustees should be able to safeguard "the protected knowledge from innovations, repudiation, internal disrespect, and external assaults." Thus, Khan continues, apostasy should be punished because it

> is aimed at dishonoring the protected knowledge of Islam. The *murtad* (apostate) is akin to a corporate insider who discloses the secrets he has undertaken to protect; he is akin to a state official who turns traitor and joins the ranks of the enemy; he is akin to a custodian who destroys the very monument he was safeguarding on behalf of the community. All legal systems punish insiders who breach their trusts; Islam punishes *murtaddun* [apostasy] too, sometimes severely.

Khan does not specify what punishment should be meted out to those Muslims in the West who compromise the "intellectual property" of Islam, and perhaps he has something in mind for them that falls short of capital punishment. After all, as he surely knows, American law generally does not countenance the execution of corporate spies and inside traders. The key point, however, is not the outlandish substance of Khan's argument. Rather, it is the fact that he was able to use an American law review as a soapbox from which to advocate the licensed punishment of apostates—and that his grossly illiberal views were never rebutted in its pages.

THE UGLY rationalizations of propagandists like Syed Mumtaz Ali and Ali Khan do not emerge from nowhere; they are attempts to legitimate the harsh social reality already faced by the thousands of Muslim

* The essay is at http://muslim-canada.org/apostasy.htm.

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apostates in the West who must constantly worry about their personal safety. For most of them, this means maintaining an extremely low profile in religious contexts.

Converts from Islam, especially those who become involved in Christian ministries, often use assumed names, or only their first names, in order to protect themselves and their families.* Thus, Abdullah, whose family hails from Saudi Arabia, kept his new faith secret for many years after converting to Christianity in 1980 while living in London. When asked about his religion, he would describe himself only as a "believer." Even after he became a churchgoer, Abdullah hesitated to talk to fellow congregants about his spiritual journey. His new faith, as he recognized from the start, has placed him directly in harm's way.

The most common dangers faced by Muslim apostates come from their own families. At a recent evangelical convention in Falls Church, Virginia, a couple of female converts from Islam told a reporter about their fears as new Christians. One woman said that when her family finds out, "I know they're going to disown me if they don't kill me." The second woman had similar fears. "My brothers haven't spoken to me in the last couple of years, and that was only because I married an American," she said. "Can you imagine what they would do if they found out I was a Christian?"

Roy Oksnevad, a missionary with the Evangelical Free Church in Minneapolis, tells of a Turkish convert whose brother, an ultra-conservative imam who also owns a lucrative carpet and jewelry business, threatened to have him killed if he ever returned to Turkey. Kris Tedford, a Farsi-speaking pastor in Oakton, Virginia, told the *Washington Times*, "I've seen some people who've come from Iran to the United States to persecute, if not kill, in order to bring back their relatives to Islam."

Even when apostates do not face physical danger from their families, they are often ostracized. This experience is not unique to Muslims, of course; it is a fact of life for many people who convert out of the faith into which they were born. But for Muslim apostates, the loss of family and community support can carry a heavy price, especially if they are immigrants. If they lose their livelihoods or the means to maintain themselves financially, they can be forced to return to their home countries—and that can amount to a death sentence.

Apostates living in the West also face pressure from Islamist radicals. Consider the case of Khaled, an Iraqi who converted to Christianity in 1990 while still living in the Middle East. Having immigrated to the Netherlands so that he could practice his new faith openly, he was surprised by the ferocity of the country's Islamic fundamentalists, from whom he received regular death threats. Paul, an Egyptian convert to Christianity, reports similar experiences in Chicago. Once his apostasy was known, he was menaced by radical Muslims who frequented the restaurant at which he worked and became the object of a sustained campaign of threats and intimidation.

RESPONDING TO opponents of Syed Mumtaz Ali's effort to bring Islamic law to Canada, an op-ed writer in the *Calgary Herald* recently chided his countrymen: "The barbarians are not at the gates, and liberalism is not under siege." Stated so broadly, this benign assessment sounds compelling. Imams will not soon preside over the courtrooms of Canada or any other Western country, and anyone physically attacking a lapsed Muslim will not be able to avoid criminal prosecution simply by pleading religious freedom.

But barbarism takes many forms in our day, and one of them, surely, is the exploitation of the West's traditions of tolerance (and, of late, multiculturalism) in the service of deeply anti-Western ends. It is a sad irony—and one that casts a harsh light on the limits of our own principles—that so many former Muslims who have come to the West seeking religious freedom have instead found, couched in the language of "equality rights," a grotesque and insidious form of the very tyranny they have fled. The danger in which they live is quite real, a rebuke to the indulgent culture of their new societies and a disgrace to conscience.

* The same concern for security makes it difficult to gather information on this topic, which has been scantily covered in the press and elsewhere. Research for this article was largely conducted through personal interviews.

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ART

Inside the New MOMA

Steven C. Munson

THE NEWLY redesigned Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York City opened last November after a remodeling that took nearly two and a half years. The event was greeted by considerable civic excitement and, at least initially, public enthusiasm. Some critics responded with the literary equivalent of "oohs" and "ahhs" over the museum's new architecture. "Serene," "transcendent," and "exquisite" were a few of the adjectives one writer was moved to employ, while another proclaimed the building a "triumph of formal restraint and practical design." Still another wrote of this "vastly enlarged institution" that it has been "saved from oppressive monumentality by its simplicity, lightness, and the elegance and ingenuity of its technological detailing."

But if the reaction to the new MOMA as a feat of construction was mostly favorable, more than a few reviewers, including a fair number of those who praised the new building's architecture, identified serious shortcomings in the same building considered as a museum. In particular, they singled out the design and character of the interior space as a venue for looking at art, as well as the way the art from the museum's permanent collection was being presented in its new home. It may be too early to know how the art-going public will eventually feel about these two fundamental issues, but much of the critical response ranged from doubt and uncertainty to disappointment and regret—and not without reason.

SOME BUILDINGS are flawed on the outside. The trials and travails of the celebrated Frank Gehry, for example, seem only to grow with each new commission for one of his signature conglomerations of giant twisting metal curves. As the *New York Times* recently reported of the Gehry-designed Walt Disney Concert Hall in Los Angeles, a decision will have to be made "whether to sandblast portions of the building's shimmering façade of stainless steel to reduce its glare on motorists. . . . [C]onsultants found that the [reflected] rays [of the sun] irritate drivers and cause temperatures on nearby sidewalks to rise as high as 138 degrees." "Other Gehry projects," the *Times* continued, "have had similar problems. His . . . swirly building for the business school at Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland has been likened to a tanning mirror and sent snow and ice sliding off the sloping stainless-steel roof onto the heads of pedestrians below." Pretty much everyone has heard about the fate of the titanium exterior of Gehry's most famous structure, the Guggenheim museum in Bilbao, Spain, which began to stain an unattractive brown not long after it was finished.

Since I have not yet had a chance to visit Gehry's buildings, I cannot speak to whether they are flawed from the inside as well. But it seems clear why his elaborate designs end up causing problems: they have sacrificed, to an unwise extent, one of the most important elements of a successful building, namely, functionality. Buildings should be beautiful, but they should also serve the purposes for which they have been built.

On the outside, the new MOMA is widely regarded as a success; the museum, as one observer put it, has

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"finally become part of the connective tissue of Manhattan." That may be true, and it may even, from some perspective, be a good thing; but the inside of the new MOMA is another matter.

MUCH HAS been made of the beautiful lines of the new MOMA, and there is no denying that, on the inside, the design in many ways creates a pleasing and comfortable space. The new layout, in the words of Glenn Lowry, MOMA's director, permits "a more open, less structured movement through the museum." But if this is an example of the beauty of ultra-modern design, it is beauty of an anonymous and mundane kind, unrelated to the supposed purpose of the museum.

When a friend asked me after my first visit what the new MOMA was like, I instinctively replied, "It's like going to the Gap. I mean, one of the upscale Gaps." However flip this may sound, I found no reason to modify my view after a second visit. The chief aesthetic quality of the new MOMA is a confident self-consciousness of its own sleek and low-key style. The building is so "cool," in fact, that, according to one news report, visitors are regularly confused about where the entrance is.

And this points to a big problem right off. Serious art museums do not exude a sense of their own style; traditionally, they are designed and constructed to serve the purpose of enabling visitors to look at works of art in a setting conducive to the reception of aesthetic pleasure. Ideally, the rooms through which one passes in a museum are simply there, accommodating and unobtrusive places where one's attention is, and can be, directed without impediment to the objects on display.

This is, I believe, true of all good art museums, whether the Gemaeldegalerie in Berlin, the Glyptotek in Copenhagen, or the Phillips Collection in Washington, D.C., to cite three examples that could not be more different in their style, their physical layout, and the scope of their collections. One museum may be charming, another austere, another stylishly grand, but once inside one should inevitably feel the pull of the paintings, sculptures, or other works in surroundings that do not compete with or overwhelm them.

Unfortunately, the new MOMA, which has essentially inverted the critical relationship between a museum building and its contents, fails this most crucial test. One might have expected, for example, that it would offer an improved showcase for the works it holds in its permanent collection. This has been the case with other recent remodelings, like that of the Baltimore Museum of Art. Instead, the art now plays second fiddle to the building; indeed, one cannot avoid the impression that the art now exists in order to adorn MOMA's new structure, whose raison d'être no longer revolves around the aesthetically educational display of paintings, sculptures, and other objects but rather around the building's understated but distinct desire to call attention to itself in a manner calculated to appeal to the broadest possible audience of upscale "consumers."

The fact that ticket prices have been almost doubled to $20.00 is the first sign of this commercializing spirit. The second is the lobby of the new building, which could easily be mistaken for the lobby of a multiplex. Nothing indicates that one has entered a museum, not even the fact that there is artwork on the lobby walls. The paintings on display when I visited—Roy Lichtenstein's *Artist's studio "The Dance"* (a spoof of Matisse) at one end, Joan Miró's *Mural Painting* at another, and Ellsworth Kelly's *Spectrum IV* in between—seemed to be serving the purpose of filling up empty wall space; that is, they had been transformed into a kind of interior decoration.

This may not matter much in the cases of Lichtenstein and Kelly; the work of both men, though the former is pop and the latter abstract, is big and insubstantial. But in the case of Miró, it is very sad to see his great painting lost on a white wall too big for anything except perhaps a game of squash. The same sensation of anonymity pursues one throughout the museum. Take away the paintings, sculptures, and other objects, and you could, for all intents and purposes, be in an ultra-modern department store. With the extra high ceilings, the uncovered blond wood flooring, the bright white walls and the even brighter track lighting, you could also be in a contemporary gallery of the kind that always seems more suitable for socializing than for encounters with art.

The rooms in the old MOMA may have been smaller and even crowded, but once you were in them the art drew you into itself. The new MOMA goes a long way toward precluding this response. The fact that the rooms open into each other in a way that facilitates the movement of visitors—"allowing for a more nuanced, less linear sense of art history by encouraging serendipitous discoveries and juxtapositions," to quote Lowry again—compounds this effect, since contemplating art actually calls for slowing down and stopping. After awhile, the design also creates a sense of disorganization, if not disorientation, if only because virtually every room seems to have more than one opening marked "Exit." (One critic reported that the head of MOMA's department of architecture and design referred, favorably, to the new galleries' layout as "resembling the child's game *Chutes and Ladders*.")

THE CONSEQUENCES for those who want to contemplate the art are apparent as one makes one's way through the building. Most critics, including some who otherwise found the building a marvel of design and execution, noticed this, and they had virtually the same thing to say about the experience of walking through the redesigned galleries. Here is Ada Louise Huxtable in the *Wall Street Journal*:

In the galleries, circulation dis-

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places contemplation. With openings in three walls out of four in almost every room for a relentlessly revolving path . . . there is always something else insistently entering your peripheral vision. . . . What is missing is the quiet place where one can communicate directly and deeply with a single work or artist. At the new MOMA, there is no repose.

And here is Michael Kimmelman of the *New York Times*:

I could imagine a few more resting spots, places at which to look at a single picture with nothing else in one's field of vision. I remember what it used to be like at the museum. . . . [P]eople still want, and need, to feel themselves immersed in a painting, to commune with art in peace, in private—or at least to have the illusions of peace and privacy: they want to lose themselves, psychologically speaking, in the work.

And Hilton Kramer in the *New York Observer*:

[T]he galleries are essentially an architectural assemblage of—what else?—oversized white boxes in which the scale of the interior space and the unrelieved whiteness of the walls conspire to discomfort the viewer while diminishing the aesthetic integrity of works of art marooned in an environment remarkably hostile to the pleasures of the eye.

I have already mentioned the Miró in the lobby. In the huge second-floor space, which rises several stories high, Monet's massive *Water Lilies* is so lost on the wall it is virtually impossible to take in. Elsewhere one finds Matisse's *Dance* at the top of a large stairwell, and works by Richard Diebenkorn and Milton Avery at the bottom.

SUCH AWKWARD placement is a telltale indication, of something more than a failure to provide for the experience of contemplating art "in peace, in private," as Kimmelman puts it. It is a sign of the diminished status that the new MOMA accords, in particular, to its great modernist paintings. Nowhere is this more apparent than on the fifth floor, the home of its core collection of 19th- and 20th-century masterpieces.

From the moment one sees Henri Rousseau's masterwork of modern "primitivism," *The Dream*, hung like some anonymous decoration on the exterior wall of the fifth-floor café, one fears alike for the fate of the art and for the possibility of enjoying it; and as one moves through the rooms devoted to Matisse, Picasso, and other masters, one's heart sinks. As astonishing as it might sound, the café has been placed directly across from the entrance to these galleries; because it is open on both sides, the cacophony penetrates well into the first room, housing the works of Cézanne, Gauguin, Van Gogh, and other key figures in the modern movement. Worse, the absence of carpeting and the "flow-through" design have the effect, not only of allowing the noise of the crowds to undulate from room to room, but, along with the bright lights and white walls, of actually seeming to encourage visitors to be noisy.

The Matisse room exemplifies the problem. Here one can find a group of the master's greatest paintings—among them, *The Yellow Curtain*, *The Piano Lesson*, *The Blue Window*, and *The Red Studio*—but the experience of trying to look at them, of engaging in genuine contemplation, is so intruded upon by the "social" atmosphere and the brilliant illumination—which overwhelms the color-created light of the paintings, making them looked washed out or veiled—that one begins to despair. Under such conditions, how can a viewer appreciate the beauty of, or try to analyze, Matisse's revolutionary use of color in composition? Or, elsewhere, immerse himself in the subtle and sensuous color harmonies of Bonnard's *The Bathroom*? Or delve into the pictorial mystery of Picasso's *Girl Before a Mirror*?

One reviewer quoted Yoshio Taniguchi, the architect of the new MOMA, as saying: "Raise a lot of money for me, I'll give you good architecture. Raise even more money, I'll make the architecture disappear." Well, by all accounts he succeeded in doing that, to general acclaim; the only problem is that the design is making the greatest art in the collection begin to disappear as well.

In this way, it has also resolved the issue of what Lowry refers to as "the defining character of the museum," giving us a building that not only manages to blur "the distinctions of feeling upon which the great modern painters had founded their art" (in the words of one critic) but that tends to render a visitor all but incapable of experiencing such distinctions—because he can no longer fully gain access to the art.

AN ABILITY to make such distinctions is required in the first place of those who conceive the structures intended to house great art. Faced with a choice, those responsible for the new MOMA have created a building that is in tune not with the ethos of high modernism—the ethos that the museum was founded to express and to serve—but, it appears, with the very different spirit of the contemporary art scene. How did this happen?

Lowry's explanation of how the design expresses the new MOMA concept is revealing:

From the outset the Museum set several goals for its 53rd Street project—some practical, some more abstract. These included the need to find a way to conceive its space, rather than simply plan its architecture, so that the predictable order of the museum could engage with the unpredictable order of the city, while simultaneously recognizing the heightened challenge of mediating between the experience of the city and that of looking at art. In order to stay "modern," the museum had to avoid becoming merely a treasure house

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or vault for its collection; it had to assert its commitment to contemporary art.

In part, then, the new MOMA is the consequence of a conscious effort to meet "the heightened challenge of mediating between the experience of the city and that of looking at art." But the fact is that this goal—effected not only by the "flow-through" interior design but most pointedly by the device of placing floor-to-ceiling window slots at various points in the galleries offering pleasant views overlooking 53rd and 54th Streets—could *only* be realized by degrading the environment for looking at art. And the striking thing about this stated goal is how eerily it parallels the creative impulse of so many contemporary artists, who themselves seek merely to replicate experience rather than coming to terms with it and thereby transforming it into art.*

Admittedly, a good deal of contemporary art does still remain bound up with the modernist tradition (although the best seems often to be that which has received the least attention from museums). But a good deal is frankly anti-modernist—indeed anti-art—and a good deal more is parasitic upon both modern art and popular culture. The primary mode of feeling of much of this art is a deadening coolness—an emotional flatness or affectlessness.

One reviewer described the new MOMA as a combination of "gigantism and chilliness." The term could also serve as a description of much contemporary art. For the contemporary era is not only one in which "novelty" and artistic technique have been glorified as ends in themselves, but one in which size, of all things, has become a measure of an art object's value.

The story is told of the art dealer who, on the basis of a photograph, sent a large truck to pick up a work by Picasso that turned out to measure less than two square feet. This story reveals something important about the visual power of a particular work of modernist painting, and also about the relation between scale and aesthetic intensity. Bigger-is-not-necessarily-better would seem an obvious truism; but the opposite dictum seems to have been guiding contemporary art for so long that it now seems almost passé.

TO GET an idea of the impact the bigger-is-better aesthetic has had, consider the following: several years back, it was reported that a West Coast museum was going to knock a hole in one of its own exterior walls in order to accommodate an exhibition of the sculptor Richard Serra's huge curved forged-steel slabs (called *Torqued Ellipses*). Furthermore, according to the newspaper account, the giant sculptures themselves had to be transported by freighter through the Panama Canal, since they were too heavy to be shipped overland from the East Coast.

Such vexations have become increasingly common; indeed, the size of contemporary works of art has been raising serious cost questions for museums, which must, if they choose to accept or acquire such works, find a way to store and maintain them. But if one of the notable features of contemporary art has been its tendency to hugeness, few have seemed interested in asking why this should be so. My own view is that in many cases, size, or quantity, has become a compensating substitute for quality; in other words, an aesthetic value has been replaced by a commercial value. For evidence of this, one need only look at many of the objects that now fill the outdoor "sculpture gardens" of some of our museums.

The importance of this cannot be overstated. As it happens, the question of what to do with all the oversized contemporary art on hand was a central issue in determining MOMA's new concept and design. Glenn Lowry informs us of two options that were rejected in conceiving a museum that could "deal with the programmatic and physical needs of specifically contemporary art while retaining the ability to present a synoptic overview of the collection." The first was "ceasing to collect contemporary art altogether"; the second was "establishing a separate museum for contemporary art." The first, he says, was "never a serious possibility," while the second "would have created more problems than it solved" by "establishing a division between the earliest and the most recent works in the collection."

This last statement is never explained. What would have been wrong, after all, with recognizing the division (or divisions) between contemporary art and high modernism? On the face of it, and especially in light of the remodeled building that now stands shiny and new on West 53rd Street, the option of building a separate museum might have made a lot more sense. (Even the first option, halting the further purchase of contemporary art, might have been worth considering.) As it was, the decision was made to turn MOMA into the equivalent of such a museum, making the presentation of contemporary art, not the presentation of the core collection of modernist masterpieces, into MOMA's de-facto reason for being.

And this in turn dictated the new design, as Lowry frankly explains:

> Taniguchi's most dramatic gesture . . . was to reverse the sequence of the collection galleries. . . . This choice of Taniguchi's simultaneously solved an engineering and a programmatic problem. By placing the contemporary galleries on the second floor, Taniguchi was able to get the high ceilings (21 feet) needed for the display of so much contemporary art, to free the space of columns, and to provide a sliding door so that oversized sculpture can be gantried in from the street, which would have been impossible on the fourth and fifth floors.

* For an elaboration of this point, see my article, "The Monotony of *Sensation*," in the January 2000 COMMENTARY.

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Two critical points emerge from this account. First, those involved in redesigning MOMA recognized, at least implicitly, the basic conflict involved in trying to have a museum that seeks to dedicate itself to both modern and contemporary art. Second, and notwithstanding some doubletalk about presenting "a more synthetic and complex overview of the early and current collection as a whole," they resolved this tension in favor of contemporary art and at the expense of the museum's modernist masterpieces.

That the choice was arrived at in order to make room for large pieces of contemporary art is, however, only part of the explanation. As Mr. Lowry points out, other options were available, and though he does not really tell us why they were rejected, one could speculate that part of the motivation was the fear that separating the two domains would be taken as a sign that MOMA officials did not judge contemporary art to be on a par with the modernist core collection. This would account for what some have seen as the most destructive aspect of the new MOMA, namely, its abandonment of the system for telling the story of modern art that was developed by the museum's first director, Alfred Barr. Hilton Kramer has described the fundamental nature of this shift, which entails a

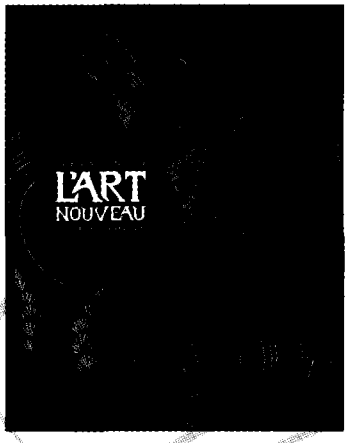
> systematic deconstruction of Barr's pioneering work in establishing a coherent, stylistically oriented history of modernist art. Barr created programs and diagrams that trace a succession of aesthetic influences and intellectual linkages . . . [and] his installations were based on this historical scenario.
>
> What has categorically changed at MOMA is the way the museum presents works of art to the public. Heretofore, MOMA's presentation was largely based on [Barr's] formalist-historical model. . . . What we encounter . . . in the new MOMA are works of art that have been orphaned from . . . the aesthetic history from which they derive their ideas and from the history of their influence on later works of art.

In light of this profound transformation, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that what really lies behind the new MOMA design is a desire to facilitate a false equation of significance between modern and contemporary art. This is, after all, what is implied by the phrase "serendipitous juxtapositions" of the past and present. In fact, there was nothing serendipitous about the juxtapositions I saw on my visits; they were quite clearly contrived to suggest that various contemporary works of art do belong in the same room with, and are thus implicitly to be considered no less valuable or important than, masterpieces of the modern era.

MOMA has done this disservice to modernism—to the art, that is, that the museum was established to collect, preserve, and help the public understand—in order, as Lowry makes clear, to make a statement about its "commitment to contemporary art." But the ultimate irony may be that contemporary art, as we know it, may be on its way out. One reviewer recorded his disappointment in finding that, in the new MOMA, Robert Rauschenberg's "combine painting," *Bed*, "suddenly looks inconsequential and wan." More importantly, the critic Peter Schjeldahl has asserted that

> the present scale of [MOMA's] spaces . . . is already anachronistic, keyed to the four-decade-old, ever-wearier reign of post-minimalism: sprawling environmental works, conceptual theatrics, Richard Serra sculpture. Today's most captivating new art runs to sizes small and medium.

If Schjeldahl is right, the new MOMA may prove to be not just a failure but a folly.



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Van Gogh Museum /
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Distributed by
Cornell University Press

www.cornellpress.cornell.edu
1-800-666-2211

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MUSIC

Letters of the Composers

Terry Teachout

ASIDE FROM what we glean by listening to their music, how do we know what we think we know about the inner lives of the great composers? Only two, Hector Berlioz and Richard Wagner, left behind full-length autobiographies written without assistance. A few others, most notably Paul Hindemith, wrote non-autobiographical but nonetheless revealing books about music, while a number of important composers, among them Aaron Copland, Claude Debussy, Francis Poulenc, Robert Schumann, and Hugo Wolf, were also talented writers—usually of criticism—who published regularly and whose writings shed much light on their thought processes.[1]

For the most part, though, the best way to find out what the great composers of the past were like is to read their letters. Even those who left few or no other writings of significance (among them Haydn, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Verdi, and Ravel) often come through with special clarity in their correspondence with friends, colleagues, spouses, and lovers. As for those composers who doubled as part-time professional writers, their letters almost always supply strikingly fresh perspectives on their life and music—as well as no less strikingly candid opinions of the music of other composers.

The best volumes of composers' correspondence are edited and annotated in such a way as to place each letter in its historical and cultural context, explaining obscure references and interpolating sufficient biographical information to shape a discontinuous sequence of letters into a quasi-narrative. Sometimes the simplest matters of presentation—like placing notes at the end of each letter, or printing them as footnotes, rather than reserving them for the back of the book—make the difference between a satisfying reading experience and an exasperating one. To read a poorly edited volume of correspondence can be a tedious task indeed.

Two recently published collections of letters—by Gustav Mahler (1860-1911) and Benjamin Britten (1913-1976)—are cases in point.[2] Though the editorial approaches of both volumes are broadly similar—as befits two composers of such considerable psychological complexity—the results could hardly be more different, both in effect and in effectiveness.

OF ALL the major composers of the late 19th and early 20th centuries,

TERRY TEACHOUT, COMMENTARY's *regular music critic and the drama critic of the* Wall Street Journal, *also writes about the arts at www.terryteachout.com. His latest book is* All in the Dances: A Brief Life of George Balanchine *(Harcourt). He was recently appointed to the National Council on the Arts by President Bush.*

[1] Hindemith's book is *A Composer's World: Horizons and Limitations* (1952). Berlioz's irresistibly vital *Memoirs* (1848-65) are best read in the recently revised translation of David Cairns, the composer's finest biographer (Everyman's Library). Wagner's *My Life* (1865-80) is primarily of interest to specialists. Igor Stravinsky's *Autobiography* (1936) and other published writings, the most interesting of which are the five "conversation books" (1959-69) he co-authored with Robert Craft, were all produced with the aid (often extensive and sometimes unacknowledged) of literary collaborators.

[2] *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, edited by Henry-Louis de la Grange and Guenther Weiss in collaboration with Knud Martner and revised and translated by Antony Beaumont (Cornell, 431 pp., $40.00). *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten, Volume Three, 1946-51*, edited by Donald Mitchell, Philip Reed, and Mervyn Cooke (California, 758 pp., $55.00).

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Mahler may well have been the most self-contradictory. He was, among many other things, a "summer composer" who was better known in his lifetime as one of the world's greatest conductors; a Jew who converted to Roman Catholicism for reasons that have variously been described as cynical, sincere, and ambiguous to the point of unintelligibility; and a warm, engagingly unpretentious friend and companion who nonetheless expected to be treated as a genius of the first order.[3] Obsessed to the point of neurosis with the oddities of his own psyche, Mahler viewed composing as a means of dramatizing interior conflicts that he took to be of universal interest and significance, though they made little or no sense to many of his contemporaries. Richard Strauss, for one, was puzzled by Mahler's lifelong quest for what he called "redemption." As Strauss remarked to the conductor Otto Klemperer, a Mahler protégé:

> I don't know what I am supposed to be redeemed from. When I sit down at my desk in the morning and an idea comes into my head, I surely don't need redemption. What did Mahler mean?

Even the conductor (and fellow religious convert) Bruno Walter, an infinitely more sympathetic colleague, referred to Mahler's personality as "extreme and radical," and dozens of other contemporaries left behind published reminiscences testifying to the fascination exerted on them by his character and its seemingly endless inconsistencies.[4]

Such a man would surely have been capable of producing an unforgettable autobiography. But Mahler, though universally remembered as an incisive conversationalist, wrote no books or articles, about himself or anything else. He was, however, a prolific correspondent, and it is no surprise that he sent many of his most revealing letters to his wife, an "extreme and radical" character whose life was hardly less eventful than that of her first husband.

Alma Schindler's romantic escapades, before, during, and after her marriage to Mahler, were so notorious as to be immortalized one day in song.[5] In her youth a composer of real but modest talent, she chose instead to seek self-realization not as a creative artist in her own right but as a muse and helpmeet—albeit one who was anything but retiring.

Rare is the male artist capable of withstanding the blandishments of a determined woman who is intelligent, humorless, sufficiently fawning, and sexually available. Gustav Mahler made not the slightest attempt to resist this one's charms. He fell in love with the twenty-two-year-old Alma in the winter of 1902, married her four months later, and spent the nine remaining years of his life pelting her with letters, cards, and telegrams whenever they were apart for more than a day or two.

Though Alma presumably knew early on that her first marriage would likely be her principal claim on posterity, it was not until 1924, thirteen years after Mahler's death—and at the urging of her third husband—that she published a selection of his letters to her. A second volume that included her reminiscences of Mahler appeared in 1940, followed in 1959 by *And the Bridge Is Love*, an autobiography based on her diaries. In all these volumes, Alma suppressed, expurgated, and otherwise altered Mahler's letters whenever it suited her hagiographic purposes (she had already destroyed all but one of her letters to him). *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife* is thus the first systematic attempt to publish their complete correspondence in its original form, insofar as the surviving documents make this possible.[6]

The editors of *Letters to His Wife* have gone to great and gratifying lengths to make their work intelligible to the general reader, offering clear, concisely written commentaries that draw on Alma's diaries and other contemporary documents, as well as providing copious footnotes. As a result, it is possible for anyone minimally familiar with Mahler's life and work to make sense of *Letters to His Wife* without resort to any other book. The editors' final judgment on Alma is as blunt as it is fair:

> Were the great men with whom she shared her life mere feathers in her cap, trophies, rather than human beings to be loved for what they were? Her letters to Mahler might have helped clarify the situation, but she destroyed them for fear of being judged harshly by posterity. It was the same fear of posterity that moved her to expurgate or willfully distort her memoirs. . . . [I]n her world nothing was ever quite real.

But it is Gustav Mahler, not Alma, in whom most readers of *Letters to His Wife* will be mainly interested, and the portrait of him that emerges is both detailed and unexpectedly ingratiating. To be sure, his arrogance also comes through clearly. (He insisted, for example, that Alma give up composing when she married him, explaining that "you have only *one* profession: *to make me happy!*") Yet so does his charm, as well as a domesticity that is attractively inconsistent with the received view of the visionary, half-mad mar-

[3] "I am well aware that as a composer I will not find recognition in my lifetime," Mahler informed a critic in 1906. "That can be expected only beyond my grave. That distance is necessary for an adequate assessment of a phenomenon like me, *a conditio sine qua non*."

[4] Norman Lebrecht's *Mahler Remembered* (1987) is a wide-ranging, skillfully edited compilation of these reminiscences. Incredibly, no full-length single-volume English-language biography of Mahler based on primary sources has been published to date.

[5] In the words of Tom Lehrer, "Her lovers were many and varied/From the day she began her beguine/There were three famous ones whom she married/And God knows how many between." After Mahler's death, Alma married the architect Walter Gropius and, later, the novelist Franz Werfel.

[6] Alma struck out in purple ink numerous offending passages from Mahler's holograph letters, making it impossible for later scholars to read what he wrote.

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tinet who fought tooth and nail with stubborn musicians and provincial critics.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Mahler has less to say about purely musical matters than one might hope or expect. But the "criticism" that does find its way into these letters is invariably worth reading, as when he describes Puccini's *Tosca* as "a masterly sham" or explains his dissatisfaction with Brahms:

> Brahms must have turned every penny in his pocket of ideas twice over, just to scrape by! But I wouldn't want to be unjust. His "so-called development sections" are the crux of the problem. Rarely does he know what to do with his themes, beautiful as they often are. Only Beethoven and Wagner were true masters of that art.

No small part of the success of *Letters to His Wife* is due to the sense of proportion with which it has been edited. The annotations, though extensive, never seem longer than they need to be, just as the book itself, which contains 350 pieces of correspondence, is perfectly suited to normal attention spans. While unfailingly scholarly in its editorial principles, *Letters to His Wife* is perfectly accessible to anyone with more than a casual interest in either Mahler.

NOT SO, alas, the third volume of *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten*, which is in almost every way a model of how not to edit the letters of a major creative artist.

To start with the most obvious problem, *Letters from a Life* drowns Britten's correspondence in a raging torrent of annotation that tells the reader far more than he wants or needs to know about even the most obscure people who crossed the composer's path. The editors seem to take it for granted that the readers of *Letters from a Life* will know nothing about anything, including how to use an encyclopedia (a one-sentence reference by Britten to having seen a performance of Jean-Paul Sartre's *No Exit*, for instance, inspires a 100-word descriptive footnote about the play).

The 50-page-long introduction by Donald Mitchell, the book's chief editor, makes all too clear the reason why *Letters from a Life* has been done up in so excessive a way. Shortly before his death, Britten asked Mitchell to write the story of his life. Unfortunately, his chosen biographer turned out to be a scholar of obsessive-compulsive inclinations. Finding himself incapable of the selectivity and synthesis necessary to rendering a great man's life in a finite amount of space, Mitchell chose instead to inflate Britten's letters into a biography *manqué*, a project about which he writes with embarrassingly gratuitous self-aggrandizement:

> It is indeed, in the spirit of Proust's towering masterpiece, *A la recherche du temps perdu*—a work that has been an influence on my own thoughts and feelings of a scale quite comparable to the music of Britten or Mahler (not to speak of Mozart)—that I have pursued, with due humility, this very text, encouraged by the publication of a biography of Proust . . . which, while scrupulously recounting a life that gave birth to the art, no less scrupulously ensures that each keeps its distance from the other.

It is also clear that Mitchell is extremely uncomfortable with the posthumous revelation that Britten was not merely a homosexual but one who was attracted to pubescent boys and sought on various occasions to act on that attraction, and whose music can at times be reasonably interpreted as reflecting this sexual interest.[7] Instead of taking this well-documented fact for granted and proceeding from there, Mitchell has sought, both in his introduction and elsewhere, to minimize its significance ("For one thing there proved, ultimately, little to report on Britten's relationships with boys—scarcely, one must remark, the only relationships in his life of importance to him").

In his efforts to smother Britten's psychological peculiarities under a carpet of footnotes, Mitchell has also disserved the composer's correspondence, which is in any case not of sufficient literary quality to justify publication at so great a length. Unlike Mahler's eloquent, intensely personal letters, Britten's are for the most part straightforward and functional. But this is not to say that they shed no light on his inner life. On the contrary, readers of *Letters from a Life* who are already familiar with such earlier books about Britten as, say, Humphrey Carpenter's *Benjamin Britten: A Biography* (1992) will find much of interest here, not least several examples of the composer's pathological sensitivity to any kind of negative criticism, however carefully formulated. As he wrote in 1946 to Edward Sackville-West, a friend and critic who had expressed some tentative doubts about certain parts of Britten's opera *The Rape of Lucretia*:

> What surprises me a little, my dear, is a rather marked lack of *faith* that you show in me. . . . My own feeling about works of artists whom I love & trust, is that when there are passage I don't like or understand, that it's my fault, & that if I work hard enough or love enough then one day I shall see the light! But, then[,] we probably disagree about the function of critics—I only want the John the Baptist kind, & have no use for the Herod type!

Would that it were unnecessary to sift through the dross of *Letters from a Life*—itself only the third volume in a series of "selected" letters of as yet undetermined duration—in order to find such glittering nuggets of illumination.

BOOKS LIKE *Letters from a Life* offer a dramatic illustration of the un-

[7] For a discussion of this aspect of Britten and his work, see my essay "England's Greatest Composer" (COMMENTARY, June 2000).

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bridgeable gap between the branch of learning known as "humane letters" and what the musicologist Joseph Kerman has called "positivistic" scholarship—that is, the amassing of mountains of painstakingly verified facts seemingly as an end in itself.

For whose benefit are such steaming piles of data so assiduously heaped up? Certainly not the common music lover in search of enlightenment about the lives and works of the great composers. Especially in the age of the Internet, there is less and less need for the publication of marginally readable books like *Letters from a Life*, whose essential substance might just as easily be posted on the Web for the benefit of scholars the world over. No matter how copiously their editors may annotate them, such books are for all intents and purposes little more than files of raw material, the stuff out of which later practitioners of humane letters carve shapely, readable biographies and volumes of "selected letters" that are genuinely selective.

No doubt those academics who long ago lost sight of the ultimate purpose of their work will continue to disdain such homely undertakings, preferring to publish more of the jargon-caked dissertations and biographical tetralogies that the university presses of yesteryear delighted in publishing. Others, however, know better. Above all, they know that scholarship is a means to the end of general understanding. That end is superbly served by *Gustav Mahler: Letters to His Wife*, a book that the editors of the next volume of *Letters from a Life: Selected Letters of Benjamin Britten* would do well to examine closely and attentively.

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THE Public Interest

Number 158, Winter 2005

Russia, The Sick Man of Europe
Nicholas Eberstadt

What Do Women Really Want?
Neil Gilbert

The Age of Depression — *Allan V. Horwitz & Jerome C. Wakefield*

Phantom Jobs and Job Losses — *Tim Kane*

Gotham's Fiscal Crisis: Lessons Unlearned — *E.J. McMahon & Fred Siegel*

Why We Study Western Civ — *Steven Ozment*

Low-Wage America: Two Views
Ronald F. Ferguson ❖ Marvin H. Kosters

Books In Review: *Kay Hymowitz and Charles Murray*

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Books in Review

Bomb Shelter

The Persian Puzzle:
The Conflict Between Iran and America
by Kenneth M. Pollack
Random House. 539 pp. $26.95

Reviewed by
Michael B. Oren

In the eyes of many Middle Easterners, Iran today seems to be on a roll. While other regimes (the Syrians, the Saudis, the Egyptians) are perceived throughout the area as inextricably mired in corruption, Islamic heterodoxy, or political impotence, Iran's Shiite mullahs have maintained an image of integrity, piety—and power.

There is much to sustain that image. From Damascus, which increasingly takes its directions from Tehran, to Bahrain and the eastern province of Saudi Arabia, where Shiite majorities seethe, Iranian influence is growing. Through its Lebanese proxy, Hizballah, the Islamic Republic has placed some 10,000 Katyusha rockets along Israel's northern border and (according to Israeli intelligence) has orchestrated almost two-thirds of all recent terrorist attacks from the West Bank and Gaza. Finally, over the past two years, Iranian leaders have leaned back and watched as the United States—the Great Satan—has eliminated two of their most pernicious rivals, the Taliban and Saddam Hussein. And even in the new Iraq, the American aim of facilitating democratic elections will enable Shiites to dominate that country to an extent unimaginable in the days of Ayatollah Khomeini.

All of these accomplishments, impressive in themselves, may yet pale beside Iran's nuclear-weapons program, which, even the most skeptical observers predict, can be operational within two years. Borne by advanced Shihab missiles, Iranian warheads will be capable of hitting not only Israel and every Arab state but also Europe and, in the not far-off future, the United States as well. Protected by its nuclear umbrella, Iran will be able to promote terror, undermine pro-Western governments, and transfer its nuclear know-how to other recalcitrant states—all with near-impunity.

Clearly, preventing Iran from acquiring a nuclear-weapons capability constitutes a primary interest for the United States and its Middle Eastern allies. But how is this to be done? That is the question tackled by Kenneth M. Pollack in his voluminous new book, *The Persian Puzzle: The Conflict Between Iran and America*. A former CIA and National Security Council analyst, and currently the director of research at the Saban Center for Middle East Policy at the Brookings Institution, Pollack is also the author of *The Threatening Storm: The Case for Invading Iraq*, which, back in 2002, portrayed Saddam Hussein as a serious menace to both America and the West and urged the Bush administration to eliminate him militarily.

Many people's ideal solution to the Iranian menace, Pollack stipulates, would involve either a reenactment of Israel's 1981 attack on the Iraqi nuclear reactor at Osirak or a combined

Michael B. Oren *is a senior fellow of the Shalem Center in Jerusalem and the author of* Six Days of War: June 1967 and the Making of the Modern Middle East.

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air-and-ground offensive similar to America's "Shock and Awe" in Iraq. But this ideal solution is also, he argues, a fantasy. Unlike Osirak, which was a single facility constructed mostly above-ground and within range of Israeli aircraft, Iran's nuclear plants are widely spread out, heavily fortified, and located in areas so remote that Israeli planes would have to refuel at least twice in order to reach them. As for armed intervention, the forces of the United States, straining to combat insurgents elsewhere in the region, seem incapable of invading a country with well over twice the population and three times the landmass of Iraq.

Lacking a simple military option, the United States might, Pollack suggests, follow the example of the European Union, which has threatened to impose sanctions unless Iran desists from making nuclear weapons, while at the same time offering to assist the country in developing peaceful nuclear energy. Recent experience, however, has demonstrated the utter inefficacy of international sanctions to restrain rogue states like Iraq, Libya, and North Korea, as well as the determination of Western European governments to conduct business with even the most murderous regimes. Though Iran has accepted lucrative inducements from Britain, France, and Germany to suspend its uranium enrichment program, the Bush administration has reason to believe that the Iranians will simply pocket Europe's concessions and proceed with that program secretly.

What options does that leave American policy-makers? The answer, according to Pollack, is: precious few. While citing evidence of growing dissent within Iran and the palpable dissatisfaction of Iranians with their repressive regime, he rejects suggestions that Washington can help trigger an internal revolt, warning that any attempt to do so would only reinforce the mullahs' prestige. The only possible course, he concludes, is a tougher version of the European formula: offering Iran a smorgasbord of economic and political incentives while threatening it with sanctions and armed reprisals.

Pollack readily concedes that even this "least bad option," which he dubs a "grand bargain," is likely to be dashed on the rocks of American military exhaustion, UN impotence, and the avarice of the Europeans, the Russians, and the Japanese. Still, he sees no other viable policy. Only by retaining large numbers of American troops in the Persian Gulf region and trying to collaborate more closely with our allies can we dare hope that an Iran with nuclear weapons will act more responsibly than it did before acquiring them.

PURPORTEDLY WRITTEN in three months, *The Persian Puzzle* has a breathless, extemporaneous quality. It is riddled with clichés, and its bibliography, though prodigious, contains not a single work in Farsi. Yet despite these and other shortcomings, Pollack has provided his readers with a concise and balanced history of America's involvement in Iran, not only over the past quarter-century but going back to the early 1800's. He skillfully reveals the contradictory thrusts of a policy that at one time supported independence and democracy for Iran while plotting to oust anti-Western Iranian leaders and backing the corrupt autocracy of the Shah. He also reminds us that the same hostile theocracy that held American diplomats hostage, supported terror worldwide, and earned a place on the "Axis of Evil," also expressed sympathy for America's losses on 9/11, helped facilitate the allied invasion of Afghanistan, and refrained from openly opposing the United States intervention in Iraq.

But if Pollack does a decent job of reconstructing the elements of the "Persian puzzle," he is utterly at a loss to suggest how that puzzle might be unlocked. Recalling the failure of every past American attempt either to ignore or to influence Iran, he can only inform us, correctly but lamely, that the Iranian bomb is a "problem from Hell," arguably the greatest single challenge facing America's global leadership. When it comes to offering a convincing formula for meeting that challenge, or providing other guidelines for maintaining American preeminence, he throws up his hands.

This denouement is certain to disappoint readers who have managed to soldier through to the end of this 500-page book. One is left wondering why, if his purpose was merely to paint a picture of an insoluble problem, Pollack bothered in the first place. A clue may lie in a recent interview in which, stating that his previous book had been based on a faulty assessment of Saddam's arsenal, Pollack proceeded to apologize publicly for having advocated war in Iraq.

In contrast to the boldness and confidence displayed in *The Threatening Storm*, at any rate, Pollack's latest volume is rife with equivocations and readily retractable assertions. A typical sentence reads: "While it is certainly possible that the current regime in Iran would revert to its former, aggressive foreign policy once it acquired nuclear weapons, it is far from certain." The book also contains several conspicuous falsehoods—"Hizballah has mostly ceased direct attacks on Israel," or "the Middle East peace process broke down . . . because the Israelis and Palestinians could not overcome their differences"—of a kind favored by the politically correct school of Middle East analysis.

It would be disconcerting indeed to discover that American intelligence and policy agencies could offer no better advice on Iran than to renew cooperation with France and Germany and pray for restraint in Tehran. But does one have to be a national-security analyst to recall that the United States is a country with hundreds of strategic bombers and thousands of long-range missiles at its disposal, with a fleet in the Middle East, and with many and powerful allies outside of Western Europe;

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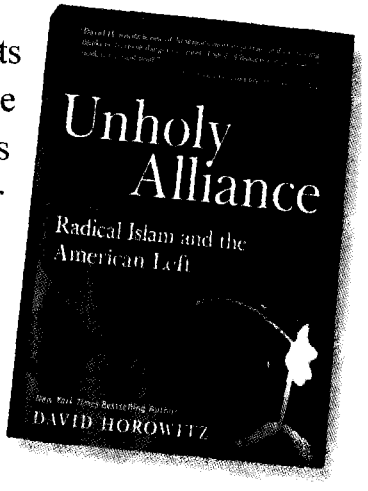
ISRAEL IS THE CANARY IN THE MINE

The war between Arabs and Jews is not the cause of the war on terror, as apologists for Muslim radicals claim; it *is* the war on terror.

Twenty-five years ago, there were two non-Islamic democracies in the Arab Middle East, Israel and Lebanon. This was too much for Islamic radicals and Syrian irredentists and Palestinians who joined forces to destroy Lebanon and make it a base for terror.

The goal of the post-Oslo Intifada is not to establish a Palestinian state alongside a Jewish state. Its goal is an Islamic *umma* extending "from the Jordan to the sea." That is why Oslo was rejected by Arafat even though Barak and Clinton offered him an independent state on virtually all of the land Palestinians claimed in the West Bank of the Jordan. That is why the very birth of Israel is referred to by all the present Palestinian leadership as the "Naqba" – the "catastrophe." To Islamic radicals at war with the West, the very creation of Israel is a catastrophe.

American apologists for Arab aggression are also apologists for Islamic aggression. In their eyes, Arab terror in the Middle East has a root cause in the policies of Israel, whom terrorists refer to as the "little Satan." For apologists of the Islamic terror of 9/11 and the Zarqawi terror in Iraq, *jihad* is not a self-generating creed but has a "root cause" in the policies of "the Great Satan," which is us.



Peace in the Middle East and peace in the war with al-Qaeda and Zarqawi will come only when the terrorists surrender or are defeated.

~ David Horowitz

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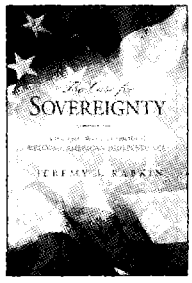

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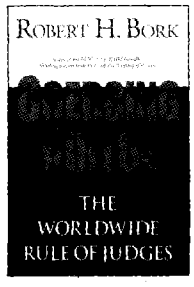

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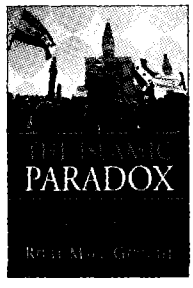

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that it is capable of dealing a death blow to Iran's military and political assets; and that it is most assuredly capable, with whatever degree of subtlety, of credibly threatening to do so?

Thankfully, one does not. Still awaiting its author is a book that will explain in clear-cut and convincing terms how the United States, together with its dependable allies—and here Israel tops the list—can confront Iran and prevent its mullahs from acquiring nuclear arms, by political or other means. Today, thanks to regional developments in Iraq and elsewhere, those means would seem to be more abundant than ever.

The Mommy Wars

Home-Alone America: The Hidden Toll of Daycare, Behavioral Drugs, and Other Parent Substitutes

by Mary Eberstadt

Penguin. 218 pp. $29.95

Reviewed by
Jonathan Kay

TWO-THIRDS of American children under six have mothers who work. Many spend their days with nannies, relatives, or stay-at-home dads. But most attend daycare. An institution virtually unknown in the United States prior to World War II is now a normal part of growing up.

The question of how children have fared as a result of this transformation constitutes one of the great flash points of the culture wars. Liberals embrace daycare for its liberating potential. Social conservatives oppose its spread, fearing it undermines traditional family life. In support of their position, both sides invoke the welfare of the children involved. Depending on whom you believe, daycare centers are either loving homes away from home, or tear-soaked holding pens that stunt the emotional and intellectual growth of their wards.

In *Home-Alone America*, Mary Eberstadt has produced a manifesto for the conservative camp. The author, a Hoover Institution scholar and stay-at-home mother of four, believes children are happiest and safest when they are under the close supervision of mommy and daddy. Her book is an indictment not only of daycare but also of latchkey children, broken homes, boarding schools, and all the other trends that encourage the separation of child and parent.

As Eberstadt concedes, most studies show that daycare has little effect on children's long-term development. But even if such results were to be believed, they ignore, she argues, the acute, if unquantifiable, psychic distress children suffer in the here and now.

Eberstadt's description of American daycare centers is bleak. A major problem is simply health. Thanks to the concentration of so many bodies in a single space, she reports, the facilities act as incubators for everything from lice to ringworm. Most daycare centers bar infectious children from attending. But parents have become experts at evading the rules. One disturbing trick involves pumping a feverish child with Tylenol prior to drop-off. The practice is reportedly so common that staff workers now ask children each morning whether they have been given any "pink medicine."

Eberstadt draws on scattered sources to argue that daycare children are prone not only to illness but to disobedience and aggression as well. One study shows that measured levels of cortisol, a barometer of internal stress, tend to be higher in children who attend daycare than in those cared for at home. Eberstadt also emphasizes anecdotal evidence suggesting an epidemic of biting. What "is the mental state of a bunch of babies and toddlers who take up biting as a habit?" she asks. "These kids aren't

JONATHAN KAY *is the comment-pages editor of Canada's* National Post.

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happy. They are exhibiting a self-protective animal instinct, which suggests they feel unprotected."

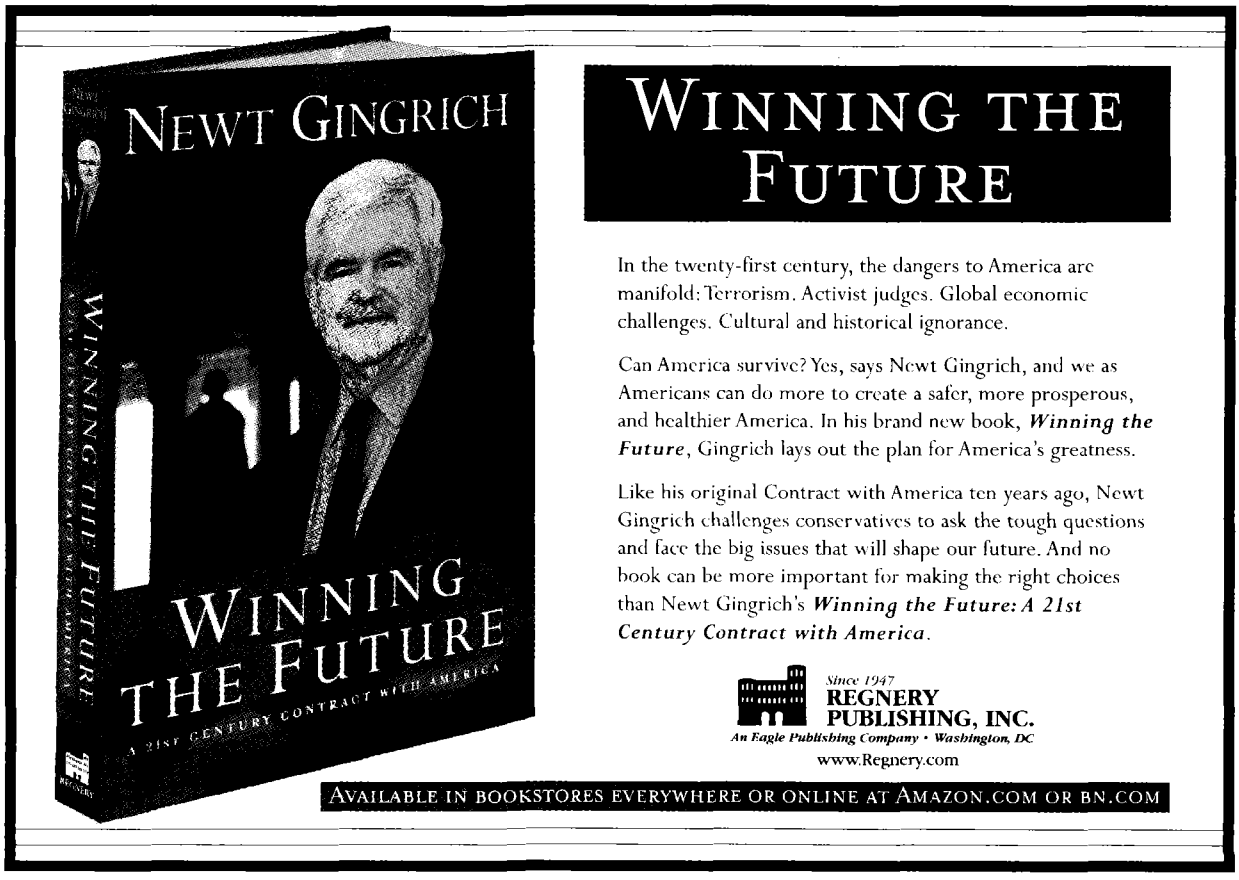
Things do not get much better, Eberstadt tells us, when children graduate from daycare and begin their school years. In days of yore, middle- and working-class American boys and girls would come home to a loving mother, a home-cooked meal, and an evening of hopscotch or stickball. But many of today's children are greeted by an empty house and a microwave dinner. Without parents on hand to ensure safe streets, outside play is off limits. And so evening entertainment consists of unsupervised television, video games, and web surfing.

Diminished parental contact, Eberstadt theorizes, fuels many of the problems facing today's youth—including obesity, drug use, promiscuity, venereal disease, and poor scholastic performance. Though she presents few data to support these claims directly, she doubts whether much hard evidence is needed. To her mind, it is simply common sense that a working mother will be less able to monitor what her children eat, drink, or smoke, whom they bring home after school, or where they go at night.

Children themselves often realize something is wrong even if their parents do not. To prove the point, Eberstadt presents a chapter-long deconstruction of hit songs that testify to "the damage wrought by broken homes, family dysfunction, checked-out parents, and (especially) absent fathers." She builds her case with a long list of confessional lyrics from such Top 40 acts as Papa Roach ("I know my mother loves me / But does my father even care?"), Everclear ("I blame my family / Their damage is living in me"), Blink-182 ("What stupid poem could fix this home?"), Good Charlotte ("mother's gone and your father hits you"), and Snoop Doggy Dogg ("It's probably pop's fault how I ended up").

Why do the media and mainstream mental-health establishment ignore what Eberstadt contends is the most obvious cause of all this pent-up sadness and resentment? The answer, she writes, is that liberals have succeeded in stifling dissenting views. To attack daycare is portrayed as an attack on women in the workplace. To point out the pathologies that accompany fatherless homes is seen as an attack on single mothers. Forced to explain the problems besetting today's children, cowed experts focus on more politically acceptable scapegoats—that is to say, mere symptoms—like television, fast food, or violent video games.

As for parents themselves, they are too vested in their careers, materialistic ambitions, and second marriages to give due regard to their children's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well-being. Many simply outsource their children's problems to psychologists and pharmaceutical companies. Thus the explosion in diagnoses for such formerly unknown conditions as attention deficit disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, separation anxiety disorder, and conduct disorder. Once a clinical-sounding label has been slapped on a child's depression or wild behavior, a prescription for potentially dangerous and addictive pills quickly follows. A study found that, by 1996, more than 6 percent of American children were taking psychiatric drugs like Prozac, Ritalin, and Risperdal, and the numbers are almost certainly higher today. Among well-to-do families, Eberstadt reports, these drugs have "become something like cognitive orthodontics."

Coming on the heels of her merciless takedown of modern parenting, Eberstadt's prescriptions for the problems she identifies are moderate by comparison. America's economy, she seems to recognize, is now built around the expectation of dual-wage earners. She also acknowledges that for many families—poor ones, especially—having a parent stay home with the children is simply not a realistic option. She is thus careful to direct her message at those whose means permit them a choice. Such families, Eberstadt argues, must accept the simple truth that "individuals and society would be better off if more parents spent more time with children." If acting on that truth sometimes means forgoing a second income, or keeping a troubled marriage together for the sake of the children, so be it.

Home-Alone America is a passionately argued work that will resonate strongly among the many Americans who share Eberstadt's fears regarding daycare and its ilk, and the appearance of this book marks her promotion to a four-star general in the mommy wars. Still, one wonders how many readers who do not already embrace her hell-in-a-handbasket thesis will come away fully convinced. In too many places, Eberstadt's argument is hobbled by an over-reliance on anecdote, extrapolation, and straight-out conjecture.

At one point, for instance, Eberstadt acknowledges that some of the trends she attributes to the new parenting—in particular, teenage violent crime and suicide—have *dropped* in the last decade. She waves away such facts with the sweeping but thinly supported claim that "today's good news does not reflect on the connection between kids and parents, whereas today's bad news does."

Elsewhere, Eberstadt notes that many mass murderers were abandoned as children, then goes on to theorize that "if feral behavior at the extreme seems rooted in extreme parental absence, it may be possible that feral behavior of other kinds is also rooted in less extreme but nonetheless significant parental absence." Similarly, she makes her case against daycare by situating it on a continuum of neglect that includes not only single parenthood but also such horrific extremes as the orphanages of Communist-era Romania. This argument will make an especially easy target for critics: social scientists and health professionals alike recognize that there are plenty of things in life that are harmful in large doses but harmless (or even beneficial) when taken in moderation.

Reductionism of this kind leads to yet another flaw. As any parent can attest, the quality of daycare varies widely. While some facilities answer to the almost Dickensian description Eberstadt offers of bawling, diseased children wandering about unsupervised or roped together on outdoor excursions "like members of a miniature chain gang," these are not places that members of her upper-middle-class target audience will recognize, let alone place their children in.

Such faults of argumentation notwithstanding, there is still a large grain of truth at the bottom of *Home-Alone America*. Even putting aside Eberstadt's more aggressive claims,

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she makes a strong case that parental absenteeism is taking its toll on American children. At the very least, she will help break the taboos that stifle debate on this critical issue. Many American parents and the experts who guide them seem as intent on protecting their cherished dogmas as on protecting children. *Home-Alone America* will help them get their priorities straight.

One for the Gipper?

Reagan and Gorbachev: How the Cold War Ended
by Jack F. Matlock, Jr.
Random House. 384 pp. $27.95

Reviewed by
Sean McMeekin

We are far enough removed from the cold war to take its sudden, peaceful conclusion for granted. It is easy to forget how tense superpower relations were in those decades, when the prospect of nuclear confrontation was an ever-present concern. The political battles entailed in waging the cold war have also receded into memory, if we are to judge by the Democratic presidential contender John Kerry's poll-tested praise for Ronald Reagan as the man who won the cold war by "working with allies" instead of threatening war.

It is always good to be reminded, therefore, of how much was at stake in the great rivalry and how it actually ended. Jack Matlock, a career diplomat who served on Reagan's National Security Council from 1983 to 1987 and then went on to become the U.S. ambassador to the Soviet Union, is uniquely qualified to perform this task, having observed developments from inside perches in both Washington and Moscow.

Frustrated with one-sided polemics that "do not square with the events as I remember them," Matlock sets out in *Reagan and Gorbachev* to restore equal billing to both statesmen in the peaceful termination of the conflict. To this end, he has supplemented his own memory of the period with interviews with key figures on both sides, and has also consulted an array of secondary and primary accounts, including transcripts of presidential summits.

Matlock's story begins early in Reagan's first term, when establishment Washington wags were infuriated by the President's seemingly obstinate refusal to negotiate with the Kremlin. Behind Reagan's intransigence, Matlock informs us, lay a principled strategy to overturn the ac-

Sean McMeekin *teaches European history and Russian studies at Bilkent University in Ankara, Turkey, and is the author of* The Red Millionaire *(Yale).*

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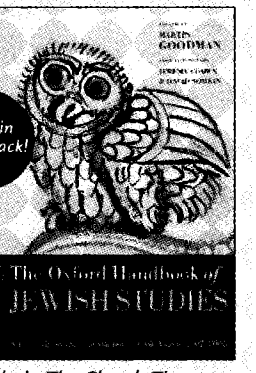

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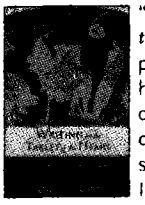

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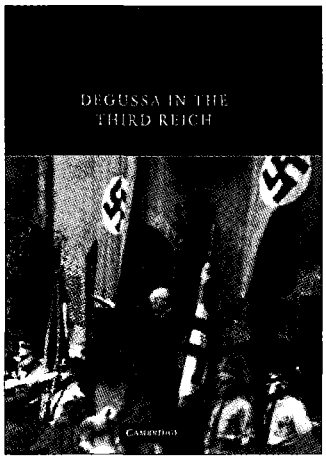
FROM COOPERATION TO COMPLICITY

Degussa in the Third Reich

By Peter Hayes



The Degussa corporation played a pivotal role in the processing of plundered precious metals in Nazi-occupied Europe and controlled the production and distribution of Zyklon B, the infamous pesticide used to gas the inmates of Auschwitz and Majdanek concentration camps, during the Third Reich.

Peter Hayes traces the extent of the corporation's involvement in these and other Nazi war crimes, including the Aryanization of Jewish-owned property and the exploitation of forced labor, and delineates the motivations for such conduct.

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commodationist diplomacy of the détente era. The key principle was an insistence on reciprocity, or, in layman's terms, no longer giving Moscow something for nothing.

As Matlock shows, the one-sidedness of superpower relations of the previous three administrations extended to matters small and large. Presidents Nixon, Ford, and Carter had all relied almost exclusively on the Soviet ambassador in Washington, Anatoly Dobrynin, as a "special channel" for sensitive communications—even as U.S. ambassadors in Moscow were not allowed to talk to senior Kremlin officials. This "made about as much sense," writes Matlock, "as it would to hire an opponent's lawyer to represent both sides in a litigation." Similarly, Soviet officials were regularly interviewed on American television news shows, while the U.S. ambassador in Moscow needed special permission to appear on tightly controlled Soviet broadcasts.

The same lack of reciprocity, as Matlock also shows, extended to far weightier issues. In 1972, Nixon and Leonid Brezhnev had signed a "Declaration of Principles" in which both powers pledged not to seek "unilateral advantage." But in the ensuing years, the Soviet Union managed to establish a clear superiority in land-based heavy intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBM's) and also had begun to deploy highly accurate nuclear-tipped missiles (SS-20's) aimed at European capitals.

By the time Reagan took office in 1981, the strategic balance was beginning to tilt in Moscow's favor. Reagan, who had made the looming danger a leading theme of his presidential campaign, had to overcome a series of major obstacles to reverse the trend. Congress, to begin with, rejected his proposal to develop a new heavy ICBM, the MX. Reagan's deployment of the famous Pershing missiles to counter the Soviet SS-20's set off waves of protest in Western Europe.

Unable fully to match Soviet offensive programs, Reagan proposed the defensive shield of the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI): like the Pershing missiles, this too unleashed a political firestorm. Still, despite the hand-wringing in Western capitals, Reagan's ambitious approach made it plain to the Soviet leaders that they would not be negotiating with a timid adversary and that they could not outstrip the U.S. in an arms race without breaking their own bank.

As the Soviet Union entered a visible economic crisis in the second half of the 1980's, Reagan gave no quarter, refusing to offer concessions until the Kremlin made significant headway toward meeting the four-part agenda he had articulated: the Soviet Union had to demonstrate respect for human rights, open its hermetically sealed borders, reduce its nuclear arsenal, and disengage from armed conflict in third-world countries like Afghanistan. If the fundamental aim of diplomacy, as Matlock writes, "is to convince the other fellow that what you want him to do is what he needs to do," this was Reagan's achievement in dealing with the USSR.

Evidently Gorbachev agreed. Through his policy of *glasnost*, he began to ease restrictions on the press and on cross-border travel, satisfying the first two demands in Reagan's framework. And by accepting lopsided reductions in intermediate-range missiles, an area where the Soviets had enjoyed a clear advantage, Gorbachev mostly gave in on the third demand (though ICBM reductions would come only later).

As for the fourth, beginning in May 1988 Gorbachev "frontloaded" the withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan, just as Reagan insisted, with "larger numbers leaving early rather than later." In that same year came Gorbachev's public renunciation of the Brezhnev Doctrine; the Kremlin had finally jettisoned the right to keep Communism in power in satellite countries by force of arms, effectively dismantling the ideological underpinning of its entire foreign

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policy. For Matlock, this represented the "end of the cold war."

Does this mean that Reagan won the great superpower conflict? Matlock's account, evenhanded to a fault, becomes even more so when he turns to this question. In the face of evidence that he himself has already presented, he insists that "everyone, including the Soviet Union, won." It would be "wrong to think," he adds, that Reagan "had forced his agenda on an unwilling Gorbachev." Rather, "as Gorbachev wrestled with the problems the Soviet Union faced, he came to see, not all at once, but over time, that many things Reagan had proposed were not unreasonable."

But evenhandedness here as elsewhere sometimes blinds Matlock to the obvious. Thus, the USSR's unilateral withdrawal from Afghanistan becomes in his telling a courageous act of strength. Gorbachev could show his colleagues in the Politburo that "the Americans could no longer keep them bogged down in Afghanistan," and present himself as "the leader who had eased international tension and restored Soviet prestige in the world."

That is hardly how the Afghan *mujahideen* and Osama bin Laden saw the humiliating Soviet pullout, or the leaders of national resistance movements from the Caucasus to the Baltic who soon declared independence from Moscow. By denying that the Soviet Union was *defeated* in Afghanistan, Matlock stretches evenhandedness to the point of absurdity.

In similar fashion, Matlock obscures the battles fought in Washington over Reagan's policies. Although he served in the Reagan White House for three years before being posted to Moscow, he seems to have scarcely noticed the State Department's resistance to the administration's more forceful approach. We can hardly blame Matlock when he tells us that he "detest[s] the Washington bureaucracy," but, beyond offering a few mild asides about its unhelpful "leaks," he never says why.

In his epilogue, Matlock takes a swipe at the Bush Doctrine and its elaboration in Iraq. Policy-makers today, he suggests, should examine "the way Reagan dealt with the mortal danger the Soviet Union's weapons posed: not by threatening military action or demanding 'regime change,' but by patient diplomacy backed up by economic as well as military strength." This critique, calling to mind John Kerry's curious commendation of Reagan's diplomatic acumen, seriously underplays the element of coercion involved in Reagan's efforts to induce Gorbachev to disarm and dismantle the Soviet empire. The story of how Reagan helped to break this adversary, despite sometimes ferocious opposition, including from inside his own government, would make a great book. This is not it.

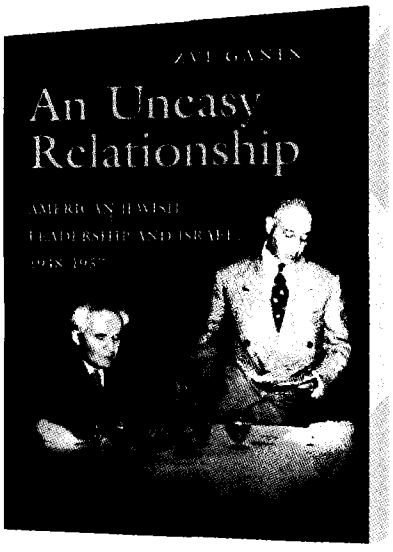
Funny Man

Kaufman & Co.:
Broadway Comedies
by George S. Kaufman, Edna Ferber, Moss Hart, Ring Lardner, and Morrie Ryskind
edited by Laurence Maslon
Library of America. 911 pp. $35.00

Reviewed by
Algis Valiunas

Being George S. Kaufman must have been as much fun as a night on the town with the Marx Brothers, absent Karl. During the 1920's and 30's, Kaufman *owned* the town, turning out hit after hit on Broadway: *The Royal Family*, *Animal Crackers*, *June Moon*, *Once in a Lifetime*, *Of Thee I Sing*, *Dinner at Eight*, *Stage Door*, *You Can't Take It with You*, *The Man Who Came to Dinner*, and others. These nine named comedies

Algis Valiunas *contributed "Sartre vs. Camus" to last month's* Commentary.



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are collected in *Kaufman & Co.: Broadway Comedies*—the Company comprising four of the 22 collaborators he worked with during a career that lasted from 1918 to 1961.

Kaufman was born in Pittsburgh in 1889. His grandparents were German-Jewish immigrants; his father, a businessman, was given to risky ventures and extraordinary generosity to his workers. Kaufman went to college to study law, but left after one semester to work as a surveyor, tax-office clerk, stenographer, salesman, and newspaper humor columnist. But the only real life for him was in the theater, and New York was his natural habitat.

In 1917 Kaufman became the drama editor of the *New York Times*, a job he held until 1930; but writing plays took precedence over writing about them. The number of these plays—at first some duds, but soon a series of Broadway smashes—is almost beyond counting. Many were made into movies, most famously the Marx Brothers' festively goofy *Animal Crackers* and Frank Capra's version of *You Can't Take It with You*, which won the Academy Award for best picture in 1938.

When not working, Kaufman lived well. Although an obsessive-compulsive disorder gave him some bizarre quirks, the gregarious pleasures were very much part of his routine: he was a regular at the Algonquin Round Table of legendary wits (who included Alexander Woollcott, Dorothy Parker, Harpo Marx, and Irving Berlin) and at the Thanatopsis Literary and Inside Straight Club, a weekly high-end poker game. In 1930, not a financially auspicious year for most people, Kaufman was earning $7,000 a week, the equivalent of over $80,000 in today's money; by 1939 he had sold twenty plays to the movies for $1.5 million, or some $18 million in 21st-century coin.

The great prerogative of worldly success is to frolic in the gusher, and Kaufman did so. Of course, some who strike it rich want the high life and some want the low life and some want all of it. Kaufman wanted all of it, or most of it anyway; and his gift as a writer was to understand—not esteem, or approve, but understand—various sorts of appetites, just as he understood his own appetites, certain of which were dubious. He loathed Hollywood, but showed no compunction about accepting cinematic pelf by the truckload. He was compulsively promiscuous, with a taste for empty-headed gorgeous starlets; but he loved his first wife, who refused to sleep with him again after a traumatic stillbirth early in their marriage, and he remained married to her until her death. Desire, urgent and sometimes disagreeable, was an imperative with which he had struck a gentlemen's agreement.

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It was the characters in his plays who did the really hard moral suffering for him: their wretched pursuit of success and its grinding joys demonstrates that getting what one does not really want can cause pain as intense as any pleasure, but never getting what one really wants causes the worst pain of all. By contrast, wanting the right thing, and seeking it with all one's righteous might, form the triumphal arch through which Kaufman's true heroes and heroines pass.

June Moon (1929), written with Ring Lardner, celebrates the artistic and moral victories of a starry-eyed hayseed who comes to New York eager to break into the music business, and who writes the lyrics to a simple, pure-hearted song that becomes a smash hit. He threads his way through the perils of business crassness and sexual cynicism with the blind confidence of Mr. Magoo crossing a busy street, and ends up with the right girl and a bright future in Tin Pan Alley. The hard-bitten crumbs who try to prey on his innocence end by festering in their own toxic juices, and everyone leaves the theater with a warm glow. The warm glow, after a nasty chill, is essential to the Kaufman experience.

At his most generous, in his two best-known plays, Kaufman is willing even to rehabilitate the hard-bitten crumbs. In *You Can't Take It with You* (1936), written with Moss Hart, the daffy Vanderhof family, which "goes about living in the fullest sense of the word"—collecting snakes, playing the xylophone, making fireworks, writing nonsensical plays—instructs a burned-out Wall Street type who wants to prevent his son from marrying a Vanderhof daughter in the supreme art of having fun. In another collaboration with Moss Hart, *The Man Who Came to Dinner* (1939), a New York critic and radio celebrity with a vile mouth is marooned with a broken hip in a small Ohio town; when his comely wisecracking assistant falls in love with a comely wisecracking local newspaperman, the critic enlists a voluptuous Hollywood slut to break them up, but finally relents in the name of true romance and following one's dreams.

The crowd-pleasing comedies of *Kaufman & Co.* are, in short, morality plays. True love and genuine vocation combat nasty ambition, usually in the form of striving for money or sex or prestige; the outcome is not in doubt, but both agony and wild fun lie in getting there. In *Dinner at Eight* (1932), a Park Avenue soap opera, Kaufman plays upon the fascination that wealth, position, and

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high achievement hold for the theatergoing sophisticate, or would-be sophisticate. Dazzling interiors, ceremonial finery, and name-dropping conversation draw you seductively into the sanctum of power and privilege; then the playwright snaps his fingers and you see that behind the apparent graciousness and beauty lies a perfect nullity: this is not the life you really want for yourself after all.

But to the rule that worldly success corrupts there is also a potent exception: the true artist who hits paydirt the hard way, and who therefore deserves every last prize coming to him. This is the theme hammered relentlessly home in *The Royal Family* (1927), Kaufman's tribute to the Barrymores, and in *Stage Door* (1936), a paean to Broadway excellence and a dig at Hollywood fatuity. Kaufman clearly considered himself one of these noble artists—one who had earned all the perquisites of success by preaching, amusingly, that the perquisites of success are meaningless.

AT THE peak of his game, when he is being an unabashed and unpretentious comedian, Kaufman sees to it that everyone has a fine time. Nobody else does zany quite so winningly as he, especially when he has the assistance of the Marx Brothers, for whom he wrote *The Cocoanuts*, *A Night at the Opera*, and *Animal Crackers*. The lunatic shtick goes on and on ("One morning I shot an elephant in my pajamas. How he got in my pajamas I don't know. . . . We tried to remove the tusks, but they were embedded in so firmly we couldn't budge them. Of course in Alabama, the tusks are looser. However that is entirely ir-elephant to what I was saying"), so preposterous that the preposterousness becomes the joke. If the moral in Kaufman's plays never changes, the laughs, blessedly, never end.

But how good was he, and as compared with what? In *Of Thee I Sing* (1931), a collaboration with Morrie Ryskind with music and lyrics by George and Ira Gershwin, presidential candidate John P. Wintergreen sponsors a cynical nationwide contest to select his wife and thereby secure his election. As irony would have it, pure feeling trumps political ambition: Wintergreen really does fall in love, only not with the contest winner but with another woman. Plenty of complications ensue before love conquers all.

Of Thee I Sing rises on occasion to the heights of fair-to-middling Gilbert and Sullivan; it also plunges to the level of a college fraternity skit. In 1932, it became the first musical to win the Pulitzer Prize for drama; Eugene O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra* lost out.

What could the judges have been thinking? They were evidently thinking that it was time for inclusiveness. Is that the same thing that the Library of America's editors were thinking in awarding a volume in their prestigious series to *Kaufman & Co.*? It certainly looks that way. They have defined the canon being published under their imprint as "America's best and most significant writing." But alongside Herman Melville, Walt Whitman, Henry James, and other undisputed best and most significant authors, they have already published, for example, the works of James Thurber, Raymond Chandler, and Dashiell Hammett. The reigning assumption seems to be that if the right people tell you that someone is as good as the very best, he is.

In fact, however, he is not. George S. Kaufman was very good indeed at the sort of thing he did. He deserves to be remembered with George Gershwin and Noel Coward as a leading figure in the brilliant popular culture of his time—though even so he never wrote a masterpiece like Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, which truly did break down the barriers between popular and high culture, or even an entertainment of the wit and shapeliness of Coward's *Private Lives*. His work is noticeably better than any television sitcom or Woody Allen movie. But it is not of the same caliber as Eugene O'Neill or even Tennessee Williams, who so far are the only other playwrights in the Library of America's canon.

Kaufman would no doubt have been immensely flattered by the tribute he has here received. One also suspects that he would have known he had no real right to it. Those who believe otherwise are erasing the necessary distinction between better and best, and doing down the idea of literary excellence.

French Blind

The War for Muslim Minds: Islam and the West
by Gilles Kepel
Harvard. 336 pp. $23.95

Reviewed by
David Warren

GILLES KEPEL heads the postgraduate program on the Arab and Muslim worlds at the Institut d'Études Politiques de Paris, where he was educated—in the heart of the French political and intellectual establishment. He has also made himself known to the American and English-speaking worlds, in part through visiting professorships at New York University and Columbia in the mid-1990's. His studies and books have focused on the development of "Islamism" in both practice and ideology, both in the Middle East and among immigrants to the West.

Kepel's 1992 book, *The Revenge of God: The Resurgence of Islam, Christianity, and Judaism in the Modern World*, has been translated into twenty languages and was among the volumes exhumed as teaching

DAVID WARREN *is a columnist and commentator on international affairs for the* Ottawa Citizen. *His essay, "Through the Eyes of Our Enemies," appeared in the April 2004* COMMENTARY.

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texts immediately after 9/11. Choosing Jerusalem as his narrative epicenter, Kepel examined what he considered to be a widespread rebellion against enlightenment and secular rationalism in all "four" living Abrahamic faiths (he wrote as if Catholicism and Protestantism were separate religions). In his reading of this phenomenon, Islamists murdering nuns in Algeria, the lone Baruch Goldstein shooting Muslims praying at the Tomb of the Patriarchs in Hebron, and violence at abortion clinics in the United States emerge as different aspects of the same broad phenomenon: a radical religious pessimism likely to spread with the collapse of the rival materialist ideology of Communism and with the failure of secular governments to meet human aspirations for a peaceful, prosperous, and egalitarian world.

Kepel might thus almost be considered the author of the cliché that would put Oral Roberts, Jerry Falwell, and Jim Bakker on the same plane as Sayyid Qutb, Ayman al-Zawahiri, and Osama bin Laden. But in that and subsequent books, he did more than identify and dismiss opposition to modernity stemming from various undifferentiated fundamentalisms. He was, for instance, among the first to notice that wealthy, well-placed, and quite literate people were in the vanguard of each reactionary movement—"true children of our time" who were adapting ancient religious commandments to modern situations with creative flair. And he suggested that, far from being irrelevant, these figures had diagnosed real problems and failures in modern society. He was proposing to take them as seriously as previous generations of intellectuals took socialism and the workers' movements. One can see immediately how such a book, written in the wake of the collapse of Soviet Communism, would seem prophetic after 9/11.

Two more antecedents of Kepel's newest book need to be mentioned. One of them, to my mind Kepel's best work, was also his most specialized: *Muslim Extremism in Egypt* (1986). Here, entering not only as a scholar and historian but as a journalist into the fevered environment of students, professors, workers, and idlers plotting radical Islamic action in contemporary Cairo, he offered a detailed corrective to the notion that Islamism was a product solely of the Arabian peninsula. The other, written in a more "told-you-so" spirit after 9/11, was *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam* (English translation, 2002). In a kind of tour of the "new evil empire," Kepel again used his skills as an academic journalist, this time to advance the thesis that Islamism had reached its height, and was now in decline. The recent ex-

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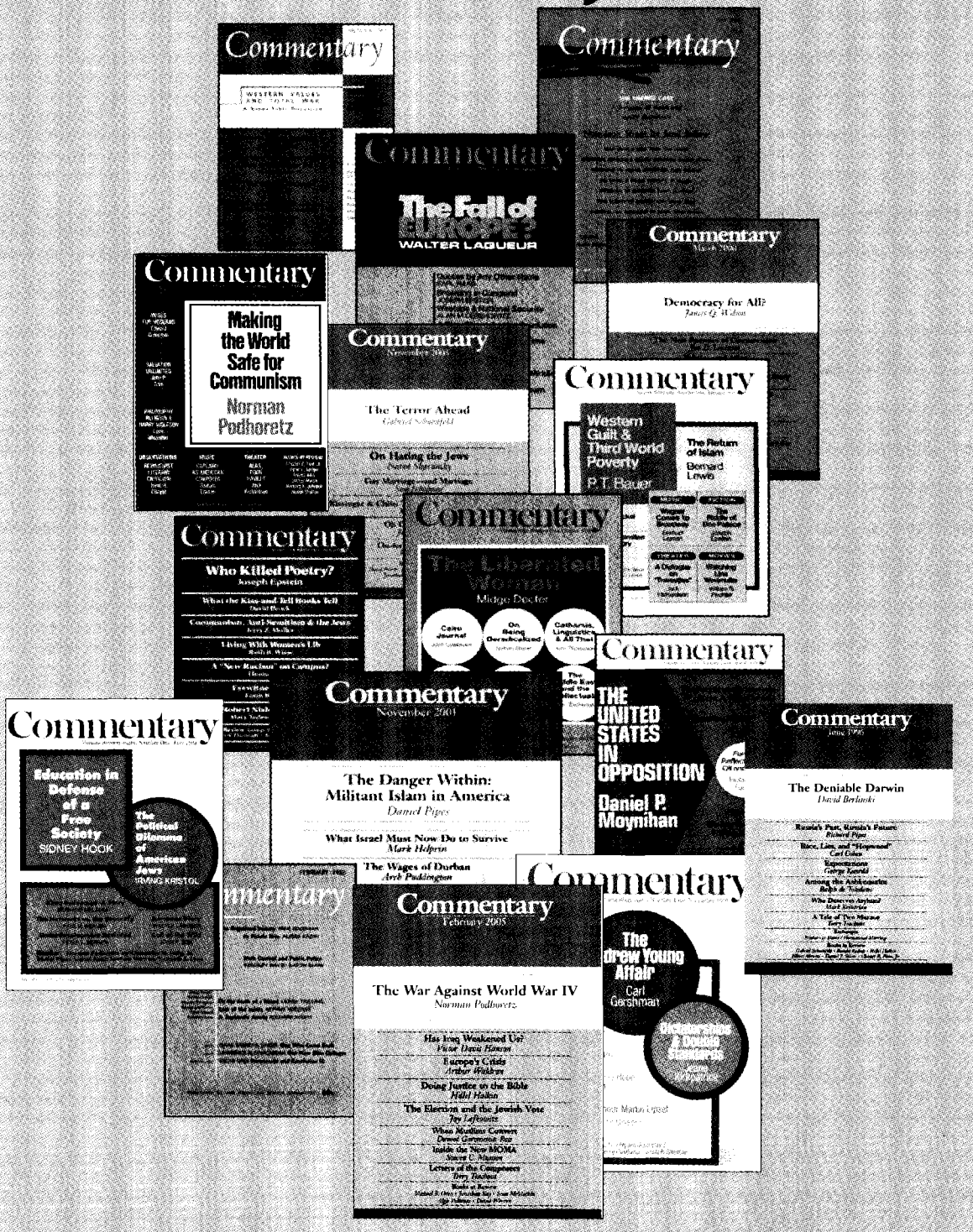

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plosion of terrorism, he wrote, was actually an indication of the failure of the Islamists to present a plausible Qur'anic vision that would unite Islam in a post-modern caliphate. Kepel confidently expected Islamism to join Arab nationalism on the trash heap of history.

THIS BRINGS us to *The War for Muslim Minds*, which goes further in seeking to show that the Islamic masses have already rejected the jihadists' vision of a universal "return" to the veil and strict *shari'a* law. From bin Laden to the Middle East's authoritarian rulers, Kepel maintains, the real debate today is not between Islam and the West, but within Islam itself. The United States, in its disastrous response to 9/11, has managed to retard the progress of this internal debate.

In striking at the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, Kepel writes, al Qaeda was in fact trying to tease the Americans into striking back, thereby exciting intense anti-American and anti-Israel passions that the Islamists could exploit for their own ends. And, luckily for them, their planes hit at a moment when a new class of American "neoconservatives," themselves persuaded that some violence would be necessary to push the Middle East out of the groove of backwardness and fanaticism, had been elevated to power and were able to get the President's ear.

Although it is amusing to read this French outsider's account of the academic battles of Leo Strauss and Irving Kristol (Strauss being wrongly taken as Kristol's guru), Kepel, unlike other foreign observers, does not portray the neocons either as malicious idiots or as hypocrites. He is at pains to stipulate that they are perfectly sincere in wishing democracy upon Afghanistan and Iraq. He has read their books, interviewed several of their "leading spokesmen," most notably Paul Wolfowitz, and acknowledges that they are not unfamiliar with circumstances on the ground in the region. He also recognizes the legitimacy of their worries about the security of Israel, and of the world's oil supply.

Nevertheless, in Kepel's view, the neoconservatives have totally blown it, playing right into the hands of their worst enemies and delivering the region they were trying to save into another authoritarian cul-de-sac, alienating and immobilizing the very middle classes that are aspiring to democracy, liberty, and apple pie (with Muslim spicing). If he remains optimistic, that is only because he sees a hopeful intra-Muslim path that might yet emerge.

His scenario goes like this. Bin Laden and company have dangled before the Arab masses the utopian dream of recovering "Andalusia lost." They have asked Muslims to choose between jihad (united struggle against the enemy, however conceived) and *fitna* (a collapse into internal dissension). Given that choice, most Muslims have clearly opted for *fitna*. It follows that some new ideal must arise to provide a standard around which to rally.

What will that standard be? Kepel reminds us of another pair of traditional Islamic antinomies that Islamists are particularly fond of citing: *dar al-Islam* (the realm that already belongs to Islam) and *dar al-harb* (the realm of war, or of the lands still to be conquered). As against these, he points to a "third way" in the Islamic concept of a *dar al-sulh*, or land of truce. The Europe that is being settled by millions of Muslim immigrants, he writes, and that is contemptuously dismissed in Islamist propaganda as the domain of unbelievers, is in actuality a place where Muslims, and Islam itself, may yet come peacefully to terms with the achievements, liberties, and secular values of the modern West. This he presents as an alternative way for Muslims to imagine "Andalusia lost"—a crossroads (as Kepel fancies medieval Islamic Spain to have been) between Christian, Jewish, and Muslim civilizations and a place where intellectual transactions can be conducted to the benefit of all three.

To the outside observer, it might appear that what the Muslim presence in Europe is currently creating is a great deal of (often terroristic) storm and stress. Kepel sees things otherwise. In the end, he writes, "the Islamists themselves, once they are actors in the European political arena, [will] find their own rigid principles giving way to the compromises of democracy." Tamed and enlightened by their encounter with Europe, these émigré Muslims will then be in a position to conduct a new and improved Islam back to the Arabian heartland.

THIS RATHER giddy vision of a future of moderation and reconciliation occupies only Kepel's last few pages. On his way to them, he supplies both background and foreground in a compelling eagle's-eye survey of the state of the Muslim world between 9/11 and the June 2004 handover of nominal power in Iraq from the Coalition Provisional Authority to the interim Iraqi government of Iyad Allawi. Kepel's freedom from romantic illusion—about, for example, the corruption and malice of the Palestinian Authority under Yasir Arafat—makes him an uncommonly useful summarizer. By any Western standard, he is genuinely well informed about the developments in the various regimes that he surveys in his smoothly written chapters.

He is also, irredeemably, French. His presentation of American policy as the work of sincere though pushy and overconfident neoconservative boobs is not exactly calculated to play as well here as there. And his own overconfident use of such comically repetitive neo-Gallicisms as "the logic of war," "the logic of peace," "the logic of forbidding entry," "the logic of massacre" can climb a long way up American nostrils. But the condescension is skin-deep, and it is balanced by crisp observations that could only come

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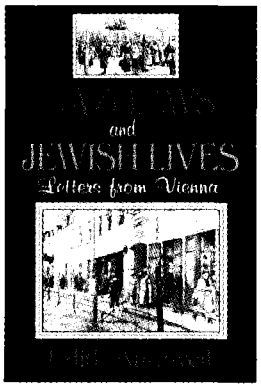

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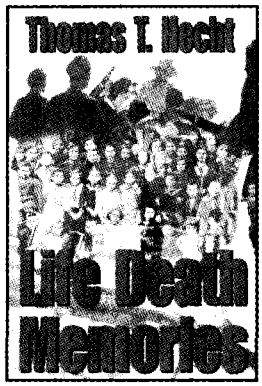

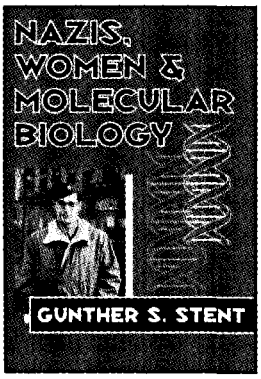

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Gunther S. Stent

What prompts a well-known scientist in molecular biology to write memoirs about a part of his life? In the case of Gunther Stent, it was not to reflect on his career as a scientist, but to come to an understanding of his own soul. In his seventies, he had come to see that he had been, throughout his life, an emotional sleepwalker, especially as regards women and, in addition, that he had been troubled by Jewish self-hatred. Stent's memoirs help to explain how Germany could have been the first country to enact an all-encompassing protection for human research subjects while it was also the country that produced the medical experiments of the Nazis and the greatest perversion of medical morality in history.

ISBN: 0-9664563-0-0 (cloth) 2004 396 pp. $34.95 / £27.95

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Publisher of Record in International Social Science

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from someone placed a long cultural distance outside the Beltway.

The real problem lies elsewhere. Although Kepel's book is remarkably free of mistakes, many of the most elementary facts about what is going on in Iraq and elsewhere are, given the pace of events, hard to discern, and his take on things will soon be hopelessly out of date. In post-publication interviews, Kepel has already had to do subtle backtracking to allow for such unforeseen possibilities as U.S. success in clearing Falluja or in finessing Moqtada al-Sadr's Shiite revolt. It tends not to occur to well-educated Europeans that the U.S. might sometimes actually manage to pull off its immediate objectives, which in this case have included such improbable aspirations as holding free elections in Afghanistan and Iraq.

THERE IS another, related problem. Kepel writes in the high tradition of French Orientalism, as he reminds us in the touching dedication of his book to Maxime Rodinson, the late Marxist student "not of Islam, but of Muslims," as Rodinson himself once put it. To such scholars, the religion of the Muslims is interesting only as it influences Muslim behavior. They are learned enough; the texts are open to them, and they can recite chapter and verse from Bible, Torah, or Qur'an, often in the original languages; but there is hardly a religious bone in their bodies. It is their strength, and their weakness.

This is especially so in the case of Kepel. He has a rational aloofness about him that goes some way toward explaining the almost unthinking moral equivalence with which he can flip from the supposed motives and mistakes of Arab jihadists to the supposed motives and mistakes of Pentagon planners. What he holds against both of them, it seems almost equally, is their resort to violence. This, to put it mildly, is a coarse standard of analysis.

It may be, of course, that Kepel at heart *believes* that violence is always counterproductive, and that this belief alone is what blinds him to the value of the American incursion into the Middle East. That a sword is sometimes necessary to cut a Gordian knot; that the Marines have at least succeeded in putting decades of potential Iraqi history on fast-forward—such ideas seem foreign to him. Nor does he appear to have fully taken on board the idea that terrorists could gain access to such consequential things as nuclear bombs, as well as biological and chemical agents that can kill millions of people—and that therefore they have to be stopped.

But in the end it is Kepel's lack of any sense of religion that, for all his learned and sophisticated Orientalism, dooms his optimistic and enlightened thesis to failure. A gun-toting Bible-belt redneck might be incapable of understanding Osama bin Laden's interpretation of the Qu'ran; but he instinctively understands the power of belief, and he would therefore understand that when a Muslim fanatic says he wants to repossess Andalusia, he does not mean it in a figurative sense, any more than Hamas wants to repossess Jerusalem figuratively. The political ideas that animate Islam, however they may be adapted from generation to generation, do not ultimately admit of other-worldly interpretations. The expansion of *dar al-Islam* is meant to happen not up there in heaven but down here on earth, and it has always required physical conquest.

It makes sense to predict that more intimate contact with the West will deeply influence the practice of Islam; but it is never safe to predict how. For one thing, a faith can continue to be influenced even more deeply by its own scriptures and tenets. For another, it is a mistake to think that the religious impulse itself will quietly go away—even in Europe. One could as easily predict that the Muslim presence will trigger a Christian revival in Europe as that it will bring about a fine secular meeting of minds of the sort Kepel dreams about.

Kepel cannot see that the secular Europe for which he speaks is itself a competitor for the allegiance of hearts and minds. He does not conceive his secular rationalism to be an alternative faith; yet it is. He simply assumes that a secular Europe can ghettoize both Muslims and Christians as Andalusia once ghettoized Christians and Jews. Many Muslims, at least, have other ideas, and they will not cease to be essentially Muslim until they are essentially converted to something else.

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A Bow to Fiscal Conservatism

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As the curtain rises on his second term, President Bush doesn't lack for opportunities to secure an enduring legacy. In addition to prosecuting the war on terrorism, the president has indicated that he wants to reform Social Security, simplify the nation's tax code, and institute health savings accounts—all noble yet formidable challenges.

Here's one additional item for that legacy portfolio: a bow to fiscal conservatism by restoring presidential line-item veto authority.

In June 1998, only two years after a Republican Congress and a Democratic president agreed that line-item vetoing was a necessary means to curb Washington's spending appetite, the Supreme Court struck down the president's ability to remove individual projects from congressionally approved legislation. Instead, the president can sign or veto spending and tax bills only in their entirety.

Not surprisingly, Congress has taken full advantage of the situation. According to the budgetary watchdog Citizens Against Government Waste, Congress this past year approved more than 10,600 "pork" items totaling nearly $23 billion—a 13 percent increase over the previous year—at a time when the federal deficit surpassed $422 billion and the national debt topped $7.5 trillion.

With Washington drowning in a sea of red ink, the timing is right to restore line-item authority. The only question is how to proceed.

Here are three options:

1. *Constitutional Amendment.* Separate bills currently before the House and Senate would restore line-item authority by amending the Constitution. Although the approval process is steeper (a two-thirds vote in both chambers of Congress, plus 38 states' approval), it improves the chances of a new law surviving an all-but-certain constitutional challenge by line-item opponents.

2. *Impoundment.* Up to 1974, presidents enjoyed a power known as impoundment: if a president didn't think an appropriation was appropriate, he didn't spend the earmarked money. But amid Watergate and its various intragovernmental power struggles, Congress restricted impoundment. Three decades later, Congress should right that wrong and give the president the ability not to spend money allocated by Congress if that spending is deemed unnecessary.

3. *Enhanced Rescission.* The president does have one option: he can rescind "pork" items and send an entire spending bill back to Congress for reconsideration. However, Congress holds the trump card: if it doesn't act, the president's rescission is automatically rejected. A simple remedy for this would be "enhanced rescission" authority whereby Congress would be forced to vote on the president's request within forty-five to sixty days, thus forcing members to go on the record as for or against fiscal excess.

Will these reforms dramatically reverse the rising deficit tide? Probably not. In the eighteen months that he enjoyed line-item veto authority, President Clinton targeted only eighty-two programs, thirty-eight of which were restored by Congress for an overall savings of a mere $2 billion—a drop in the federal bucket.

Nevertheless, it would send a positive message to a cynical public: if Washington can't halt runaway spending, at least it is willing to hand over the reins to the president and let him try to slow down the horses.

—Bill Whalen

Bill Whalen is a research fellow at the Hoover Institution.

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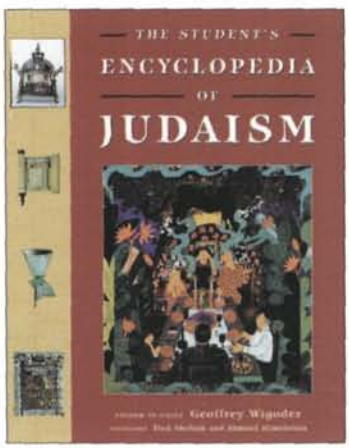

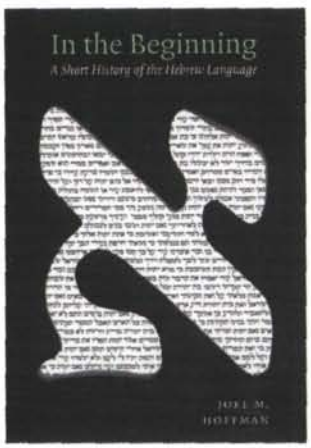

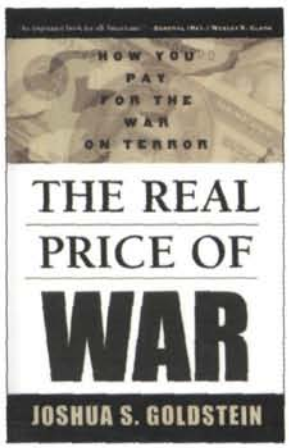

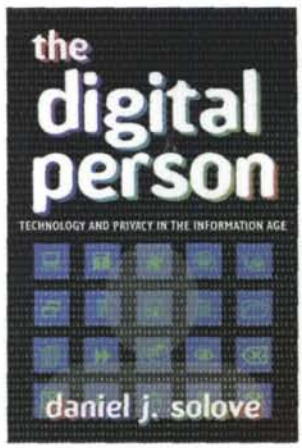

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